# (Re)producing a periphery
## Popular representations of the Swedish North

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GERUM – Kulturgeografi 2010:2
ISBN: 978-91-978344-3-8
ISSN: 1402-5205

http://www.geo.umu.se
Elektronisk version tillgänglig på http://umu.diva-portal.org/

Kungliga Skytteanska Samfundet

Kungliga Skytteanska Samfundets handlingar, nr. 66 * 2010
ISBN: 978-91-86438-40-1
ISSN: 0560-2416

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Tryck/Printed by: Original
Umeå, Sweden, 2010

# Acknowledgements

The best thing about writing a thesis is that you have the chance to thank people who you appreciate and who have supported and helped you over the years.

First, I appreciate that without competent heads of department, I wouldn't have learnt a new birthday song, I wouldn't have been able to travel as much, or buy as many books, and would never, ever, have been able to make a film. Thank you, Kerstin, Dieter, Einar, and Ulf, for so brilliantly and joyfully organizing the department during my time as a doctoral student. And thank you Lotta, Margit and Erik for your admirable patience, competence and efficiency.

Urban Lindgren, my advisor, thank you for all the fun, the eccentric outbursts, the long discussions and the way you always make me argue for my cause. We rarely agree on ideological stuff – nevertheless, you have helped me sharpen my arguments. You have stared at me, listened to my arguments and, yes, you have often bought them! And, well, I have bought some of your arguments as well. You haven't had an easy job with me. Thank you for always having time to read and discuss. Thank you for being so brave. And sorry for talking about classical music as background music – you've probably forgotten about it, but I remember your wounded facial expression.

Thanks also to my professor, Gunnar Malmberg – you have made life easier for me from the first day we met at the department. I appreciate the way you always take me seriously no matter what. I appreciate your open mind and your playfulness. You helped me to initially pose the research question that is the base of this thesis. Our grant from Vetenskapsrådet made it possible for me to slightly (okay, considerably) change direction from mainly doing quantitative migration studies to this...and, you have always encouraged that. We have even written an article together, a very radical and polemic piece, soon to be published in France for all to read.

I am for ever thankful to you, Aina Tollefsen, who became one of my advisors a couple of years down the road. You recharge my spirit with your idealism and radicalism. You have read my texts more thoroughly than I have myself, and you impress me with your knowledge in so many different fields. You talk and discuss unpretentiously as you drink your pretentious coffee. Thank you for seeing the potential in this thesis, and thank you for taking the time to read and discuss despite everything else. You are my hero.

During the course of my doctoral studies, I have had the pleasure to get to know an expert on internal orientalism, which is foundational to my work. Thanks David Jansson for your interesting research, and for your careful comments.

I am indebted to Allan Pred who met with me every week for a whole year while I was in Berkeley; if there is an original thought in this book, I owe it to him. Allan will always keep teaching me as I read notes from his lectures and his books. Also thanks to Hjördis for being so generous – for sharing your grief and joy.

Many people have read, discussed, and commented on my texts over the years, and I appreciate this very much. Many thanks to: Christer Nordlund, Mekonnen Tesfahuney, Carina Keskitalo, Jonathan Friedman, Linda Lundmark, Linda Sandberg and Charles Hirschkind. Special thanks to Kjell Hansen, for the supportive comments at my pre-dissertation seminar. Also, many thanks to my excellent editor, Judith Rinker-Öhman.

I also owe thanks to my interviewees, thanks for your time and effort, I really enjoyed talking to you.

Thank you to all my fellow graduate students, particularly to Erika Sandow, Jenny Olofsson, and Linda Sandberg. You are true friends, always there to support, to rage, and to laugh. I don't think I would have managed without you, honestly. Also, thanks to Linda Lundmark, Anne Ouma and Cecilia Gustafsson for your humor and kindness.

I also want to thank my friends for making me see things I otherwise never would have seen. Thanks especially to Anneli Aronsson (who is the only one I am really sure will read this thesis) and Andrea Mannberg who is always there, with a song, an argument or a Budweiser, and to my dear hilarious friends, Anna-Karin and Ida. I want to give many hugs of thanks to my Berkeley friends Andrea, Julie, Sonja, and Lorraine for filling time spent there with coffee breaks, wine, bad music, and books. I also want to thank Fredrik Oskarsson and Oskar Östergren for travelling with me to the inland of Västerbotten to make a film. The way you let people be heard makes me happy, and I appreciate what you did to make that happen.

Thanks to my four sisters Sofia, Sara, and Rebecca, and especially to my twin sister Liselotte, my biggest fan. Thanks, beloved twin, for helping me with my texts and for your ironic and twisted comments. And thanks to my nieces and nephews – André, Pontus, Jesper, Saga, and Elisabeth for making me all warm and happy.

Tack också till mina kära föräldrar, Anita och Björn, för att ni tycker att allt jag gör är så bra och för att ni slutat bry er om vad jag gör. Ett stort tack till Judiths farfar och farmor, Torgny och Margareta, för att ni älskar Judith så, och för alla middagar ni lagat när jag kommit hem sent.

Finally, to Rikard, my soulmate and discussion partner, you have been a rock – always smiling even though I know you have gotten tired of reading my texts and answering my demanding questions. The work with this thesis has made me pale and weak, but when sitting in my oxygen-poor and insanitary office, the thought of you has given me the strength and joy to carry on. My dearest little Judith, you have never really liked the fact that your parents have things to do besides playing with you. These past months have been torture for me with not being able to play with you and kiss you as much as I normally do. Rikard and Judith, I love you so.

Madeleine Eriksson
Umeå, September 2010

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# 1. Introduction

> "If the social is inextricably spatial and the spatial impossible to divorce from its social construction and content, it follows not only that social processes should be analysed as taking place spatially but also that what have been thought of as spatial patterns can be conceptualised in terms of social processes." (Massey, 1995:65)

The point of view adopted in this thesis is one of essential geographical importance: The focus is on representational practices through which identities and difference are constituted and perpetuated, and result in material effects.

Certain places and people are viewed as prosperous, with a bright future ahead, while others are depicted as weak and marginal and in need of support from stronger regions or the state. Places are involved in the wider 'power geometries' of the processes of globalization, and regions that are less favored in global processes of restructuring typically suffer from unemployment and out-migration (Massey, 2004; Eriksson, 2009). Accordingly, these places and regions also hold a certain position in the national imagery, becoming margins or peripheries and not truly part of the construction of modern Western nations (Schough, 2008). Unequal opportunities may become obscured and be translated into 'local cultures', causing the problems of the region to be blamed on the people living there (e.g. Jarosz and Lawson, 2002). The (re)production of places therefore entails highly contested political and economic actions involved with the fundamental question of who takes responsibility for whom (Massey, 2004). Thus, it is important to point out that representations of places and people are not neutral, but suggest certain ideas and views of the world.

Instead of focusing on 'classic colonialism' and common subjects of postcolonial research (see e.g. Said, 1978; Ridanpää, 2007), this thesis focuses on the processes that create structural inequalities *within* Western states. These national-scale relations have been ignored, and the self-righteous self-images of the West have the potential of masking the uneven distribution of political and economic power among people and places within Western states (Pred, 2000). Diken and Laustsen (2005) and Foucault (2003) stress that the European practice of colonialism on other continents was brought back to the West to first target the domestic 'exceptions', such as the sick, poor and criminal, but also other groups in a country's own population. Accordingly, the West could perform something similar to colonization on its

own peoples. Similarly, Hilbert (1997) asserts that the nation is about identifying its inside from its outside, but also excluding and including particular places and people *within* the nation.

In order to understand these relational processes of inclusion and exclusion of people and places, we must consider the representations and self-image of nations, in this case the self-image of Sweden. Since the 1950s, Sweden has successfully marketed its image as a progressive and modern nation where equality persists and racism, sexism, class boundaries and other conflicts are long gone (Ehn et al., 1993; Pred, 2000).[1] Yet a growing number of researchers on Swedish inequalities have started to seriously contradict these taken-for-granted facts (among many: Ehn et al., 1993; Andersson and Tesfahuney, 1993; Schierup and Paulson, 1994; Pred, 2000; Lundmark, 2002; Svensson, 2006). Research on Swedish racism shows how undesirable traits, such as sexism, racism and dependency on welfare, are edited out of the national identity and projected onto racialized immigrants and the working class (see e.g. Pred, 2004). This thesis argues that similar mechanisms target people in rural areas: the 'glesbygd' (Eng. sparsely populated area), often synonymous with northern Sweden or Norrland[2]. The representations of Norrland and the rural may be seen as a part of neoliberal discourses, processes and phenomena, often referred to as the 'urban turn' within politics and science, which clearly advocate for increased spatial dispersion[3]. This celebration of urbanity has deepened the rural/urban binary and resulted in representations (in politics and science, but also in the media and popular culture) of the urban, in contrast to the rural, as 'modern', inhabited by progressive, mobile and creative people.

The focus of the analysis is on representations of Norrland, a territory in the northernmost part of Sweden, comprising 58% of the nation. Scholars from various disciplines, such as history of ideas (Sörlin, 1988), ethnology (Vallström, 2002), archaeology (Loeffler, 2001), geography (Schough, 2007) and literary studies (Hansson, 2010; Öhman; 2001), put forward Norrland as different from the rest of Sweden, in ways that may simultaneously be both idealizing and stigmatizing. These representations of difference may

[1] Allan Pred (2000) asserts that the denial of racism is of course not unique to Sweden; But what is particular with Sweden, across classes, is that the view of Sweden as the best in the world at social justice has become an important part of people's identities. "Denial based on those elements of identity and taken-for- granted appears most widespread and entrenched … among those generations most apt to regard the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s as an unproblematic golden age, to unreflectingly link the economic expansion and improving social welfare of that period with the moral internationalism of Dag Hammarskjöld and Olof Palme." (Pred, 2000:85)

[2] I use 'northern Sweden' as synonymous to 'Norrland', but bear in mind that the metonyms of the two categorizations differ.

[3] David Harvey (2006) refers to this as a 'centralizing logic of capitalism'.

signify the 'othering' of Norrland and suggest that Norrland is viewed as different in contrast to a modern and normal 'us'. In this way, Norrland as the other is both idealized and marginalized; it is represented as more 'authentic' but also as less developed and sophisticated. The representations of the other are about marginalization and subordination and, ultimately, how certain stories are made true, what is possible and not possible to say and who is excluded and included in the representations. Hence, the way places and people are represented matters, because, as Derek Gregory asserts: "... representations are not mere mirrors of the world. They enter directly into its fabrication" (Gregory, 2004:121).

Different from previous studies on the othering of Norrland that mainly focus on historical or literary work, this thesis seeks to understand contemporary social, political and economic processes through the study of representations. Hence, if we can understand the ideology of the representations, the very idea of them, we can understand how and why cultural geographies are made. If not, the power that exists in the ability to make use of certain representations will remain unexplained, and we will never understand how or why difference is actively produced (e.g. Mitchell, 2000; Pred, 2000).

Taking the discourse on 'Swedish modernity' and the theories of 'internal orientalism' as starting points, the overarching aim of this study is to explore the representations of Norrland as part of the construction of regional and national identities and as part of the discourses on neoliberal globalization[4]. More specifically, this thesis draws attention to the ideological effects of representations, the reenactment and resistance[5], as well as the material consequences of different Norrland representations. This is done by dealing with contemporary texts, images and interviews that in one way or the other concern or discuss Norrland, yet the issues brought up here may very well be applied to any other territory or place that is represented as marginal or weak, and the processes and power relations studied here may correspond to those at work in many other parts of the world.

The research question of this thesis has emerged from what I experience as gradually more and more political and tense representations of marginalized

[4] Neoliberal globalization implies that the relations between states are institutionalized through neoliberal ideals and the workings of organizations such as IMF and WTO. Ideals that frequently shape the nature of economic relationships between states (Peck, 1996). Following Massey (2004), places are not simply subjected to globalization; Both the degree of exposure and agency and, thus, the responsibility, vary between places.

[5] There are many opinions about the meaning of 'resistance' (see e.g. Denning, 1996). I talk of resistance, not necessarily as forms of active struggle, and not necessarily as purposeful actions, but as embodied practices that become part of discourses of resistance (Pred, 2000).

groups within Sweden[6], people who are looked upon as drawing from the reserves, the unemployed and sick, those who are represented by politicians as not contributing to society and described with metaphors like "utanförskap" (Eng. otherness)[7]. The priorities have shifted, and greater pressure is being put on individuals and places, which is not always visible in practice but rather in rhetorics (Harvey, 2005).[8] The shifts in politics are justified in terms of increased international competitiveness and the 'threats of globalization'.[9] A small nation such as Sweden is considered as particularly exposed to 'forces of globalization'.

From a global perspective Sweden may be regarded as an insignificant and peripheral actor, with old traditions and a sparsely populated rural landscape. The same binary occurs within Sweden: Northern Sweden is viewed as correspondingly marginal, perceived as remote nature with inaccessible mountains, the spectacular Northern Lights, snowfall, reindeer and a primitive and native Sámi population. Northern Sweden is also increasingly viewed as a place without a future; a place incapable of competing on a glob-

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6 Since the 90s, Sweden has implemented significant neoliberal policies (Ryner, 1999; Harvey, 2005; Helldahl, 2008). In 1990 unemployment was well under 2%, whereas two years later more than 10% of the jobs disappeared. During the period 1991-2007 the divide between the rich and the poor increased, with the richest 10% of the population increasing their disposable income by 88%while the poorest 10% increased their disposable income by only 15%. The absolute poverty has decreased, whereas the relative poverty has increased (Social Report, 2010). The risk of poverty has increased among those receiving welfare payments: the sick, unemployed and elderly (SOU 2000:3). Since 1993, total unemployment has been between 12 and 14%. These figures include the approximate 3% of the workforce engaged in government-subsidized job-training programs and public-works projects (Statistics Sweden, 2009).

7 The current government first used the term 'utanförskap' during the 2006 election campaign . The term is now used to signify anyone without an occupation, and is criticized for being too general and only focusing on economy and the ability to work when 'utanförskap', according to critics, is more about a feeling of not belonging. According to critics, 'utanförskap' connotates feelings of not being listened to or valued, and not being regarded as apt to participate in democratic processes (Abrahamsson, 2009).

8 Today policies instead aim at decreased state regulation, increased liberalization of the economy, reduction of taxes, and a continued reduction of welfare state obligations. Moreover, Sweden has gone from a situation of structural overemployment to high unemployment rates, characteristic of the European Union. The lives of the unemployed, sick and elderly have become harder, with reduced levels of welfare payments and greater demands on those entitled to subsidies (Harvey, 2005; Helldahl, 2008).

9 These changes in Swedish policy have been preceded by the rhetorics of neoliberal globalization similar to Thatcher's TINA (There Is No Alternative). Globalization is viewed as a challenge and a force that puts pressure on high-tax countries and those with generous welfare systems such as Sweden. There is a constant threat from companies that they may leave and employ cheap labor in other parts of the world (Harvey, 2005). Present Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt talks about globalization as something that comes toward us like an unstoppable wave, something "we must be prepared for" (Reinfeldt, 2007). Many oppose such statements and the assumptions supporting them: Researchers such as Callinicos (2001) and Harvey (2005) criticize the notion of globalization as a force of nature. Most researchers do agree that the reactions of global financial markets can destroy government policy programs, although Callinicos asserts that this is not new: "Since at least the 1930s, nations have felt pressure from the flight of capital" (Callinicos 2001: 27). According to some researchers the 'global' character of capital is also overstated; Even though companies relocate, states keep some degree of influence over businesses. Scholars critical of the view of globalization as a 'natural force' assert that politicians, for instance, often disregard that neoliberal policies may have helped give rise to globalization through policies such as free trade, the liberalization of foreign investment regimes, and capital market deregulation.

al market; a place with unemployment, out-migration and an elderly population. These representations form an imaginary contrast to culture, civilization and the progressive and modern, traits that have come to be associated with the urban South at the expense of the representations of northern Sweden.

The different representations of Norrland are a question of someone's power to signify someone else, and what is more important, on their behalf. People around Sweden have different images of the North, not only because of their different geographical positions but also because of their different social, economic and political positions. Even though northern Sweden obtains its different meanings in different contextual situations, one thing that is common to almost all of them is that they become meaningful through a certain aspect of binarism, such as culture/nature, modern/traditional, rural/urban, North/South.

## 1.1 Outline

This first chapter has already introduced the research question and the main arguments. The outline of the rest of the thesis is as follows: Chapter 2 presents the methodological and theoretical perspectives and practices that form and guide this thesis. Chapter 3 is based on literature studies and shows changing and enduring representations of Northern Sweden. Here, I give an account of the historical and lasting construction of Norrland, the many power relations, and the specific (and general) political, social and economic conditions of Sweden and Norrland. Needless to say, this chapter has been cruelly delimited; Much more is possible to say about the many themes I only briefly engage in, and many more themes could be added and highlighted.

Chapter 4, *Norrland in the News Media*[10], is a critical discourse analysis of the news discourse on Norrland and attempts to show the representations of Norrland in news, the enduring representations of a 'periphery', and the journalistic practices and logics that contribute to the representations. This chapter connects to the aim of the thesis by giving an account of the taken-for-granted categories, stereotypes and binaries by and through which Norrland and other parts of Sweden are reproduced in influential media texts. Chapter 5, *Norrland in Film*[11], is an analysis of a Swedish film. This chapter

[10] This is an amended version of an article previously published in *Geografiska Annaler Series B*.
Eriksson M. (2008): (Re)producing a "peripheral" region – northern Sweden in the news, *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 90 (4):369 – 388

[11] This is an amended version of an article previously published in the *Journal of Rural Studies*.

contributes to the aim of the thesis by showing the link between neoliberal ideals and the representations in a film, how fact and fiction become enmeshed and how the film becomes more than only entertainment, how representations are reworked and resisted and yield real material effects. Chapter 6, *Selling Norrland*, analyzes various actors – commercial and political – and how they reproduce, rework and resist representations of Norrland. This chapter is an attempt to highlight the need to recognize the unequal and questionable ways places in Norrland can be known or produced for consumption. It addresses the aim of the thesis as it shows how discourses on neoliberalism globalization contribute to enhancing the urban/rural and modern/traditional binaries in Sweden and how stereotypes of Norrland (or the North) are used in order to sell products. But the ways places are marketed and commodified may play a part in the reproduction of stereotypes as well as become tools for resistance. Chapter 7, *Talking about and Imagining Places*' is based on seven in-depth interviews, and has the aim of analyzing narratives of experiences of moving within Sweden. This chapter addresses the question of individual identities, how identity narratives become linked to representations of discourses on mobility and place, and what roles representations of space and mobility play in subject formation among the informants. Finally, Chapter 8, aims to bring together the issues and analyses found in the previous chapters.

Eriksson M (2010): "People in Stockholm are smarter than countryside folks": Reproducing urban and rural imaginaries in film and life. *Journal of Rural Studies* 26 (2):95 – 104

# 2. Starting points

## 2.1 Material and method

This thesis consists of four empirical studies using different materials and, to some extent, different methods. The kind of material I analyze and how I treat it is clarified more thoroughly in each empirical chapter, but since there are similarities between the studies some further clarifications may be useful here. The first empirical chapter, *Norrland in the News Media*, contains the most formal methodology, inspired by critical discourse analysis, and uses news articles as material. The form and content of the other studies have successively evolved during the research process through reading, watching and writing. I have allowed myself to be curious, to add material as I went along with my analyses and my methods of representation (e.g. Gren, 1994). This thesis comprises discourse analyses of news media, a famous Swedish film, Web pages, marketing of recognized products and places, and narratives from interviews.

The kind of discourse theory I draw from (with the exception of the chapter on critical discourse analysis) does not provide any design for empirical research (Wetherell and Potter, 1992). Discourse theory provides a few tools and perspectives and some starting points as to how discourse theory might be employed, but the actual utilization of the method and theory is to be left up to the researcher. This does not mean that the possibility to evaluate and examine arguments offered by discourse analysis is constricted. Of course, as with any other mode of research, discourse analysis must show transparency and systematics when selecting and dealing with source material, and when offering arguments and explanations (Bergström and Boréus, 2000). All chapters draw, in different ways, on theories of Orientalism, and I examine the disjuncture between claims asserted through representations and the bases of those claims. I trace the oppositional elements that 'taken-for-granted facts' typically rest on, such as modern/traditional, male/female, urban/rural (Cloke et al., 1997).

During my years as a graduate student I have taken notes and collected contemporary and old news articles, scholarly research, images, TV shows and film that in one way or the other concern representations of Norrland. The discourses and phenomena associated with the construction and reproduction of places and people in the North have permeated so much of public and private life that literally every day I am exposed to statements and discussions I could very well incorporate into my thesis. Hence, I have not travelled around in Norrland conducting fieldwork on representations of Norrland in

accord with a completed agenda, to study these representations as a "(supposedly) detached observer" (Pred, 2000:xvi); On the contrary, I have stayed put and lived my life as an inhabitant of Västerbotten and Norrland (see Haraway, 1988).

The point of departure is that the material of my studies, media and individual narratives, not only passively and neutrally give an account of events in society; Rather, media texts and narratives are socially constitutive and interact with multiple discourses (Fairclough, 1995). The material I regard as important has nothing to do with the texts' claims of accuracy but rather with their being social facts in themselves, producing text and images. These texts, regardless of their content, articulate representations and are active components in discourse and hence become central to the production of the popular geographical image of Norrland (see Pred, 2000).

It is not first and foremost within the realm of politics or science that identities are constructed; Different media such as newspapers, the Internet and film are particularly influential forums for expressing cultural ideals of gender, class and sexuality, but are also ideals regarding ways of life and the right to space. Representations in the media often construct a mainstream self and a marginalized other, and these texts are in this way used to exoticize 'foreigners' or indigenous populations, to control what is regarded as 'normal' practice. Thus, hidden ideological biases can encompass the production, and therefore the consumption, of things like film and news texts (hooks, 1997; Cloke et al., 2004). Different media belong to different genres or modes of appeal. A genre is a collection of many discourses linked together by a common style and approach. News is a genre, as is political debate, the action film and the romantic novel. Each genre plays a particular role in the construction of worldviews and must be understood as such. Even so, text and image are reproduced intertextually and travel between genres and transform meanings; Thus, genres are entangled and discourses become reproduced, reworked and resisted.

This thesis revolves around different media and the representations and discourses that are (re)produced, reworked and resisted. The three empirical studies (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) are in a sense explorative studies based on different kinds of text, and the bases of the analyses are largely representations of the work of journalists, scholars, place marketers and filmmakers. These different media texts play important parts in people's lives, as they are well known and common references among a large portion of the Swedish public. The media, in general, are so integrated into our (Western) societies, it is close to impossible to avoid representations in magazines, newspapers, IT and television. We are provided histories and imaginaries and 'taken for

granteds' while sitting at our kitchen tables and in our living rooms, listening, reading and watching. In addition, everyone with access to a computer and the Internet can also write, talk and be seen, providing *their* histories, imaginaries and 'taken for granteds' to the world, but this is of course true to varying degrees for different groups in society. Nevertheless, a laptop or a cell phone gives people the freedom to mediate and receive accounts at any location, during any other activity. Our consumption of media becomes part of our identity and an important way for us to socialize (Falkheimer and Jansson, eds 2006). Consequently, studying the media today offers an infinite amount of potential material. I do not make any claims to cover the whole area of representations of Norrland, and this study is not an attempt to say how things are, but merely to show how things might be rendered.

This thesis must inevitably leave much unsaid and never exposed, raising as many queries as it answers. Also, this thesis says as much about me and my geographical imaginations as anything else (cf. Pred, 2000:xvi).

The selection of research question certainly has to do with the fact that I grew up in the inland of Västerbotten and can remember the closing of the only post office, and indeed I also remember the threats from politicians to close our school and the mobilization of the village to stop this. I know about the many livelihoods, the casualness and the calm quality of life, but also the tediousness and the constant threat of downsizing and unemployment. I think it matters in my reading and writing that I left my home village for high school in a small market town, and that I continued my studies at universities in different cities, and that I even travelled and lived abroad. It is worth mentioning that I somehow again ended up in northern Sweden, this time in Umeå. I think it matters in my analyses that when I come across stereotypes of rural populations, I feel the power relations. And when I listen to the life stories of people from different parts of Norrland, I feel a hint of nostalgia.

## 2.2 Theory

The theory and method of this thesis are entangled, and the reader has probably understood that this thesis is concerned with representations, which are the ways people imagine, interpret, signify and give meaning to material and social aspects of the world. As already pointed out in the methodology section, there are many different forms of representations, for instance pictures, tables, maps, theories, film and science. Some representations refer to visible phenomena (such as a road on a map), while others refer to invisible phenomena (for instance, when someone maps a discourse). But representations often refer to both aspects of the world; In other words, all representations

depend on a sign system that decodes the materiality of the representations to bring forth their meaning (Gren, 1994).

### *2.2.1 Discourse and representations*

Following Hall (1997; 2001), discourse is about both language and practice. A discourse is a way of representing the knowledge about a particular topic at a particular historical moment. To view discourse as practice is also to see discourse as emerging out of practice, which is crucial since practices entail meaning, and meanings shape and influence what we do. Accordingly, all practices have a discursive feature (Hall, 2001). In other words, meaning is produced within language by the work of representation (see Hall, 1997).[12] In light of this, "The concept of discourse is not about whether things exist but about where meaning comes from" (Hall, 2001:73).

Drawing from Hall (1997), representation is the production of meaning through language, discourse and image, but there is no simple correspondence between language, signs and the 'real world'. To be able to convey meaning through and within language, we are dependent on codes brought to us by way of social conventions. These codes become our shared 'maps of meaning' or 'cultures' (Hall, 1997). But, notably, the meanings of language are always changing and so are our maps of meanings. Nevertheless, 'cultures' and places are often represented as being homogenous and static.

Through an insistence on the existence of culture, culture in fact comes into being. Scholars from the social sciences, cultural critics, marketers, geopolitical strategists and so on use culture as an explanation of difference; The abstraction of culture is filled with meaning and made 'real', not by the work of culture itself but in the process of defining culture. As geographer Don Mitchell (2000) asserts, suggesting that culture is a map of meaning tells us nothing, but may even mask the question of power relations that so occupy the work of Stuart Hall. There is a risk that we will continue to divide people into distinct, bounded cultures, even when we recognize the boundaries as unstable. Following Mitchell, culture in itself does not exist, but the *idea* of culture exists and is powerful in attempts to control, order and define 'others' (Mitchell, 2000:75).

> "When someone (or some social formation) has the *power* to stop the infinite regress of culture, to say 'this is what culture *is*'; and to make that meaning stick (by for example, saying 'this is what we will and

[12] I adhere to a poststructuralist and social constructionist approach, whereby it is the process of representation that gives concepts and practices their meaning and function, and reality gets its meaning through discourse.

will not fund'), the 'culture' as an incredible powerful *idea* is made real, as real as any other exercise of power. Aesthetic representations are turned into physical representations" (Mitchell, 2000:76).

Culture may be seen as representations of 'others' and as a means of representing power relations; In this sense it is the idea of culture that is important, as 'culture' gives no explanation – it is 'culture' that needs explanation.

My interest in representations concerns the power to represent, classify, mark and assign someone and something within a particular regime of representation. While semiotic analysis aims at studying the 'poetics of representations', discourse analysis studies the 'politics of representations', examining the effects and consequences of representations seen as formations of discourses (Hall, 1997:6). In this thesis the main focus is on the politics of representations; the different ways representations (which always involve power) are (re)produced reworked and resisted. When analyzing the stereotyping, the reduction of everything about a people or a place to certain traits, I am interested in how the representations become part of a discursive formation that comes to be taken for granted (see Hall, 1997). This discursive reproduction of taken-for-granted truths may be seen as the main objective of critical analysis (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 2001). Representations may appear natural and acceptable until they are challenged. They have ideological effects in the sense that they may build on already established 'truths', and are ideological since their meanings are reproduced and reenacted through the means of power and dominance (Nilsson, 2009). In the production of knowledge (as in knowledge about culture) definitions are struggled over – knowledge is always contested, but some forms of knowledge become more powerful than others, becoming hegemonic. Dominant or hegemonic discourses are those we regard as natural and true, discourses that make the dominated accept dominance and act according to the will of the powerful, by creating consensus, acceptance and legitimacy of the domination (Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1997). This process is not as straightforward as is suggested here; Dominance is mutually produced through complex forms of social interaction, communication and discourse (Hall, 1997).

The focal point of this study is that 'Norrland' gets its meaning through discourse but that the meaning and knowledge of Norrland is always struggled over. In the reproduction of difference, Norrland is fixed and defined by those with the power to generalize. Power relations are transformed through negotiation, contestation and struggle. Power enables and constrains practice, and embodied situated practices, discourses on meaning and power relations are always fused together. These elements, by no universal law,

reproduce space and place and relation between spaces, places and people (Pred, 2004).

### *2.2.2 Intersectionality*

Relevant in the discussion of dominance are the (re)production and reenactment of different social categories. Drawing from theories of intersectionality theorized by Nira Yuval-Davis (2006; 2007) and Gill Valentine (2007), the intersection of class, ethnicity and gender, as well as the role space and mobility play important parts in subject formation. It must be recognized that identities are not constructed in a vacuum. Every space is racialized, classified, gendered (and so forth) in a unique way, and is constructed to fit into and (re)produce categories and hierarchies (Valentine, 2007). Stereotyping and marginalization are dependent on space and have spatial consequences; In other words, power relations construct identities and are played out in space, place and time. Identities are situated, which implies the notion of identities as not being but becoming. Positions, identities, differences and belongings are made and unmade, claimed and rejected (Valentine, 2007).

Theories of intersectionality are just as important in dealing with hegemonic positions or privileged and powerful identities. These identities are also 'done': White is a color, men have bodies, and middle-class and highly educated people are also situated and embedded in the significance of space (or what Yuval-Davis terms 'social location'). Furthermore, there is no meaning to the notion of 'whiteness' if it is not gendered and classed; for instance, race alters the meaning of gender, and individual people experience different social structures simultaneously (Yuval-Davis, 2007; Valentine, 2007).

This struggle between competing discourses must necessarily mean that discourse theory and analysis are closely related to issues of power, power relations and hegemony, what definitions and meanings are "*made* to be true" (Hall, 1997:290), because, needless to say, not everyone has the same power to influence politicians or the news media's reporting. In other words, how places are positioned, viewed and represented is of great importance. Hence, I will give an account of the processes at work when Norrland and other places are positioned, viewed and represented.

### *2.2.3 Place in the North*

> "The North was home because the hyperboré identified Swedishness with qualities like whiteness, the cold and a northerly location…At the same time, the North was foreign because it was far away, it was diffi-

> cult to get to and it constituted an environment that could be discovered, studied and colonized." (Schough, 2008:59 own transl.)

The image of the polar bear seems to be a symbol of peripherality and remoteness (Hansson and Norberg eds. 2009). The famous postcards from Boden in Norrbotten, with badly pieced-together montages of polar bears in the city, have provoked many laughs over the years. Boden was represented as the peripheral city young men had to go to in order to serve in the Army (Figure 1). A similar photograph from the same period depicts the city of Umeå in the county of Västerbotten. The postcard illustrates a peripheral and exotic city by way of putting a polar bear outside the railway station (Figure 2). What is more, the Umeå polar bear is also present in a contemporary piece of art from 2008, as the artist asserts (ironically) that tourists expect to see polar bears so far north (Figure 3). Even so, the whole of Sweden is peripheral in an international context. My cookie cutter from Stockholm illustrates this with perfect clarity (Figure 4).

> "...this accentuates how imaginative the concept of 'the North' really is. It is not a region located beyond a certain line of latitude, but rather beyond the social and cultural ambitions of the human imagination." (Ridanpää, 2007: 12)

Space is, as much as place, constituted of social relations and narratives about them; Space is social relations "stretched out" (Massey, 1994:2). Following the logic of relational thinking, space and place are always in a process of becoming, since they are products of relations that are materially embedded practices that must be carried out (Massey, 2005). In other words, social relations do not exist, nor are they best understood, in some abstract purity. Instead, they must be understood relationally and situationally in both space and time, and in terms of a variety of spatial scales. Thus, by understanding place as relational, places must be seen as arenas of negotiation; 'meeting places', internally complex and always being negotiated and fought over.

The social and political relations between places vary, and responsibility derives from those relations through which identity is constructed. These relations often have a past, but have continued into the present and produced powerful and much less powerful places. Gatens and Lloyed (1999) argue that we are responsible for the past, not because of what we as individuals have done, but "because of what we are" (Gatens and Lloyed, 1999:81, quoted in Massey, 2004:9). Massey similarly argues that places ought to be responsible for the wider relations on which they depend. Massey (2004:10) asserts that we all are discursively subjected to "a disempowering discourse

of the inevitability and omnipotence of globalization", but that places are not simply subjected to globalization; Both the degree of exposure and agency and, thus, the responsibility, vary between places.

Figure 1: A typical postcard from Boden with polar bears in front of the garrison. The postcard is postmarked 1965, originator unknown.

Figure 2: Polar bears in front of the railway station in Umeå, Västerbotten. The postcard has only a faint postmark, originator unknown.

Figure 3: This polar bear was one of several light installations in the exhibition “Umeå Autumn Lights” in 2008. Artist, Hans Albrechtsson. The text accompanying the artwork says: “I Umeå finns det isbjörnar så långt bort ligger det. Med 1,4 mil packtejp och med ett ursinningt norrländskt tålamod har en isbjörn tejpats fram, för att säkerställa denna myt för nyanlända besökare” (Eng. “Umeå’s so far away it has polar bears. With 14 kilometers of packing tape and furious Norrlandic patience a polar bear has been taped into existence, to secure this myth for newly arrived visitors”). The exhibition was part of the city’s bid to become the European Capital of Culture, and its purpose was to spawn a wish for people to visit Umeå (Umea Municipality, 2009). Own photo taken in 2008.

Figure 4: Last Christmas I was given a cookie cutter shaped like a polar bear, bought in Stockholm at a souvenir shop. The cookie cutter was accompanied by the text: "Polar bears in Sweden? Sure, but that was 11,000 years ago. Some cold winter days when your breath seems to freeze, it isn't hard to believe that you might see a polar on the streets. And the myth lives on…" Own photo taken in 2008.

In a national context, Massey's argument may imply a responsibility toward areas within Sweden, such as Norrland with its places and natural resources essential to the future of Sweden, but with limited opportunities for people to earn a livelihood. Massey's point of view is essential, and bearing in mind this perspective of the responsibility of places and people, and the inherent injustice between places, the following arguments of 'internal othering' are easy to follow.

### *2.2.4 Internal other*

> "Norrland, which plays such an enormous role in our sustenance, is still somewhat of a *terra incognita* to great parts of our country, who believe it only contains mountains and skiers, forests, Lapps and reindeer." (Lundberg, 1957:9 own transl.)

In terms of social inequality, postcolonial research can be regarded more as an emancipatory strategy directed at the processes of maintaining otherness

than as an objective analysis of it (Spivak, 1988). Postcolonial research explicitly admits that its conscious goals are to criticize the unevenly developed world and actively participate and intervene in discussions on social problems (Young, 1990; Said, 1993). From this perspective the postcolonial analysis of northernness is easily admissible, as any representation of otherness can be approached as a proper subject of postcolonial analysis (Ridanpää, 2007).

The postcolonial manner of perceiving history can be adapted to any relationship between centers and peripheries, such as the marginal position of northern Sweden in school geography books in relation to southern Sweden. This is another form of colonialism than what is acknowledged in Anglo-American literature and research, and thereby could be viewed as lacking 'global relevance' (Ridanpää, 2007). Nevertheless, the Swedish North has been colonized by the 'southern civilization' just like the 'Tropics' were subordinated to the rule of the European empires.

The easiest way to connect postcolonial criticism with the case of the northern imagination is probably to analyze the social position of Sámi minorities (e.g. Pietkäinen, 2003). The marginality of ethnic groups has been the most popular (and probably the most comfortable) way to adapt postcolonial theories (e.g. Hall, 1995). At the conceptual level, 'ethnicity' and 'race' are defined through colonialism and are therefore also 'natural' subjects for postcolonial research. But if postcolonial research actually means political criticism, the research must focus not only on 'classic colonialism' in so-called developing regions and their oppressed majorities (see Cosgrove 2003; Ridanpää, 2007) but also on the important question of the linkages between the problems of Western society and colonialism (Foucault, 2003; Hilbert, 1997). The Sámi people are a minority not only in Sweden, but also in northern Sweden, so when the representations and identity of the North become intertwined with exoticism and stereotypes of the Sámi people, the colonialism and orientalism of northern Sweden turns into a still more complex social process.

Said (1978) asserts that geographical imaginations can be seen as assumptions concerning how space and relations in space produce and shape processes and changes, and how these are spatially expressed and materialized. These imaginations are based on available but subjectively chosen knowledge, normative ideas and ideological beliefs articulated in and through discourse. In Western nations research is often viewed as being apolitical and objective, but as Said points out, nowhere has anyone successfully developed a system to isolate researchers from real life. Said, inspired by Walter Benjamin, Antonio Gramsci and Michele Foucault, pays as much

attention to literature and theater as to political science and government reports. Said asserts that Orientalism controls an area of studies, imaginations and research institutes and that it is therefore impossible to avoid, both intellectually and historically. Hence, to understand the systematic production of the Orient, politically, artistically, ideologically and scientifically, Orientalism must be understood as a discourse (Said, 1978). Said defines Orientalism as the discourse preceding colonization, but also as an enduring postcolonial discourse justifying marginalization long past actual colonization. Said (1978) argues that the Orient has helped define Europe as its contrasting image, idea, personality and experience. The Orient must therefore be represented as fundamentally different. This process is referred to as 'othering' (exclusion and inclusion) and involves a process of reflection whereby other people, cultures and environments are everything our cultures are not; 'Their' otherness contains 'our' sameness. This implies that meanings of places are constructed as bounded, enclosed spaces defined through difference, and that the construction of place attempts to establish a relationship between place and identity. The theory of Orientalism has been criticized for ignoring the heterogeneity of colonial power, and for failing to see the role of resistance and the ability of the 'other' to represent itself, as well as for overlooking the simultaneous essentialization of the self and the Occident (Hussein, 2002).

Drawing on the theories of Orientalism of Edward Said (1978), many scholars have given attention to the division within regions and within the nation (see e.g. Turner, 2000; Wolff, 1994; Todorova, 1997, Paulgaard, 2008). The construction of the 'immigrant other' in Western countries is examined by several scholars (Pred, 2000; Gregory, 2004), as are representations of the 'rural other' (Cloke and Little, 1997; Paulgaard, 2008). Much research on 'the other' within the nation includes the processes of 'othering' on the basis of gender, place and class (see e.g. Valentine, 2007; Jarosz and Lawson, 2002).

Not unlike the representations of the Orient described by Said is the 'Norrlandic', often assigned to a different, more pristine time, and to a different place; It is described as a peripheral and more primitive area, situated 'somewhere else' (Vallström, 2002). In this way, Norrland has been both idealized and devalued over the years, often simultaneously. Long before Norrland was incorporated into Western cartographic reason, Norrland or 'the North' was merely part of a popular geographical imagination. In one of the first writings on Norrland by Olaus Magnus in 1555, Norrland is represented as an exotic paradise inhabited by innocent and natural people (the Sámi). The exotic was the boreal, barren, the frozen and the wild, but also the productive; Northern Sweden was described as a place that ought to be

colonized. Olaus Magnus reproduced the popular imaginations of the North and Scandinavia that flourished in Europe from the end of the 1000s. Representations of the North and Scandinavia were commonly made up of extraordinary nature, monsters and imaginary animals, but also speculation over what natural resources might be hidden in this terra incognita (Schough, 2008). The geographical imaginations of Norrland, but also of Sweden, were those of peripheries, which may be still the case today; In an international context, Sweden is nothing more than part of a northern periphery. Katarina Schough (2008) describes the imagination of Sweden as 'far away North', an imagination that became important for the Swedish self-image at the beginning of the 1800s and forward[13] as it came to contrast the colonial representation of people in the tropics (in the very South). The Swedish nation, nature, and the virtues of the people were constructed as superior to other people and other parts of the world. Schough outlines a both altering and persistent discourse on Sweden, the "hyperboreal", and shows both colonial imaginations within Sweden and colonial fantasies targeting more distant parts of the world. And, as already pointed out in the introductory chapter, several researchers argue that the construction of national distinctiveness produced by the elites to identify the inside of the nation from the outside also produces internal exclusion (Hilbert, 1997; Foucault, 2003). The issue of categories of 'others' has been raised, pointing to the others at a distance, arguing that under postmodern spatiality the distance that separated the otherness of 'there' and the local sphere of 'here' is less apparent (Giddens, 1984). Haraway (1991) and Massey (2004), on the other hand, point to groups of others under modernity that were never located in a distant part of the world, for instance women. Massey asserts that there is no easy correspondence between distance and difference. Instead, Massey suggests that processes of 'othering' (exclusion and inclusion) imply the manipulation of spatiality, and the kinds of power involved and the ways they are enforced through the configuration of the spatial are different in every situation (Massey 2006).

David Jansson (2003; 2005) brings together the theories of internal colonialism by Hechter (1975)[14] and Said's theories of Orientalism and highlights

[13] Schough, in her book *Hyperboré: föreställningar om Sveriges plats i världen* (2008), argues for the persistence of these discourses. See also Pred (2004), *The past is not dead: facts, fictions and enduring racial stereotypes*.

[14] Early research on internal colonialism is provided by Hechter (1975), for whom internal colonialism (re)produces unequal rates of exchange between urban power centers and peripheral hinterlands within the nation. The lack of sovereignty within the internal colony produces a contingent development that limits the economic welfare and cultural integrity of the region. According to Hechter, this is expressed by the reproduction of hierarchical cultural divisions of labor at the individual level. Individuals are expected to identify mainly on the basis of ethnicity and not social class (Hechter, 1975). Because of its deterministic approach, this theory has been subject to much criticism although, reworked and altered, it has been used by scholars from various fields (Lanto, 2000; Mc Carthy, 2000).

internal orientalism as a deeply embedded practice and tradition of representing a subordinate region as afflicted with various vices and lacks so as to produce an exalted national identity. Jansson shows the construction of the spatial 'internal other' in the US South, and points out that the spatial relationship involved in internal orientalism must necessarily be different from those of Orientalism since the 'othered' region belongs to the nation state, which implies access to national institutions. The 'othered' region would thus have more of a voice in the national discourse than what the Orient had in the discourse on the Occident. This suggests that the relationship between opposing regions in internal orientalism may be more complex. internal orientalism involves the creation of essentialized geographic identities on both sides of the binary (Jansson 2003; 2005). Following Jansson, one might argue for the significance of related practices in the construction of Norrland as the most rural, traditional and problematic region in contrast to an otherwise modern nation.

### *2.2.5 Swedish modern*

Sörlin (1988) has studied the modernization process in Sweden and Norrland, and talks about tensions between "Agricultural Norrland" and "Industrial Norrland" (Sörlin, 1988:263), tensions that according to Sörlin existed throughout the era of industrial breakthrough but have been reworked and altered. The controversy over modernization and its consequences was fought in a long drawn-out debate referred to as 'the Norrland Question', an issue that sharply focused the national political attention on Norrland from the 1890s until World War I. Sörlin highlights the Norrland Question as an issue that directly confronted the established political parties and came to concern attitudes about modernization. Several aspects of modernization, including industrialism, urbanization, the decline of agrarian self-sufficiency and ideals of cosmopolitanism, were criticized by those who preferred small-scale industries that would take into consideration both people and the environment.[15]

The discourse on modernity, as a part of Western culture, can be seen as a system of differentiation and a system of social reproduction (Mitchell 2000); Traits that do not fit into the discourse on a modern, liberal and progressive nation are positioned to a specific geographical space and a specific group of people. In this way, the rest of the nation can be represented as modern, liberal and progressive and the problems within the nation can be represented as expressions of regional 'cultures' or 'spaces of exception'

[15] Sörlin (1988) points out that there was no easy correlation between people's opinions on modernity or ideas of the future of Norrland and their general political views and ideologies.

(Jansson, 2005). Rights to represent are, in other words, closely linked to power, and places' identities are constantly (re)produced, reworked and resisted in space and time by multiple discursive networks. The identities of place are not fixed or stable, and are not constructed in a vacuum; Place and space are in unique ways racialized, classed, gendered (and so forth), and are constructed to fit into and (re)produce categories, hierarchies and 'imagined communities'.

The creation of the nation states in Europe from the seventeenth century onward necessarily involved the construction of nationalistic 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983). Many scholars have stressed the significance of nationalism as the ideology that forms the foundation of the construction of our political and geographical worlds, and that national identity is reproduced not only within politics, education and religion but also in the apparently trivial, casual conversations and actions of daily life (Billig, 1995).

> "The Swedish national identity has been tied to our *modernity*. It's been bound with the now, with the feeling of belonging to the avant-garde, the most modern. We've seen ourselves as the favorite child of the Enlightenment, that other states have to measure up to." (Johansson A.W,. quoted in Grinell, 2004: 27 own transl.).

Many scholars have argued for the important place discourses on modernity hold in the geographical imagination of 'Swedishness' (see, among others Ehn et al., 1993, Pred, 2000; Grinell, 2004).The Swedish national identity has changed over time from representations of Sweden as a 'proud nation of war heroes' to involving a more 'modern' and internationalist outlook (Ehn et al., 1993). The social democratic project was launched in the 1930s, and the focal points of the project were centered on democracy, citizenship and modernity, and the project became a radical re-construction of Swedish national identity. Ehn et al. (1993) stress the importance of the construction of a collective imaginary of a modern nation heading toward the future without unnecessary baggage, such as traditions, habits and old loyalties. The only thing of importance was the future. The ideals of modernity were embodied in the landscape by way of planning, architecture and restructuring in industry, as well as by way of social engineering. Accusations of traditionalism and conservatism were directed at the old elite as well as 'outdated' country people, and the new national identity came to life through a growing modern and urban middle class.

Sweden has successfully marketed its image as a progressive and modern nation where equality persists and where racism, sexism, class boundaries and other conflicts are long gone (Ehn et al., 1993; Pred, 2000). It can be

argued that this self-image has the potential of masking the uneven distribution of political and economic power between people and places in Sweden. The apparent 'others' of these progressive and modern nations are those that fail to meet the standards for what is considered modern. Sweden's internal others are, like in many other European nations, immigrants and refugees from non-Western nations.[16] An important argument in this thesis is that the representations of Norrland may contribute to disguising Swedish racism and other inequalities within the nation. Undesirable traits, such as sexism and dependency on welfare, are edited out of the national identity and projected onto the 'immigrant others' and white working class but also, as I will show, onto the rural and the 'glesbygd' (Eng. sparsely populated area), which are often represented as northern Sweden or Norrland. Moreover, instead of speaking of Swedish institutional racism, the Swedish racism is positioned to remote rural parts of Sweden (see Pred, 2000; SOU). The representations of Norrland and the rural as obsolete may also be seen as a contrast to, and part of, the 'urban turn' within politics, science and the media that represents the urban as 'modern', inhabited by mobile and creative people, issues discussed more thoroughly in Chapters 5 and 6. It is simply taken for granted that the world we live in is 'modern', and the appreciation of the modern makes us represent contemporary events, places and people we do not consider modern as backward and undeveloped (e.g. Bauman, 1989). Bauman (1997) describes modernity as the impossibility to stay put and the possibility to always be on the move.

Consequently, it is represented as right and even necessary to transform the non-modern into the modern. But the immobile 'backward periphery', as defined and represented by the modern urban elite, is also important for maintaining the distinction between places and groups of people. The rhetoric of transformation (modernization and integration) of the peripheries, as well as the reproduction of uneven power relations between the modern centers and the non-modern peripheries, is contributing to the construction of modern nation states (cf. Tesfahuney and Grip, 2007).

## 2.3 Periphery

The centre-periphery theory was initially a way to analyse the uneven development between nations and was theorized by Marxist-inspired scholars

[16] The immigrant others are located in the deprived areas on the outskirts of the city, areas that can be described as Sweden's spatial internal others. Researchers such as Eriksson et al. (2000), Molina (2001), Jansson (2009) and Pred (2000) have, in different ways, explored how these suburban areas together with their inhabitants are discriminated against and stigmatized by the Swedish majority. Pred (2000) shows how the racial becomes the spatial in the construction of the other and in the construction of the Swedish national identity.

such as Frank (1977), Amin (1974) and Wallerstein (1974). According to the theory, spatial power relations result in uneven development; A region or place develops at the expense of another region or place. Swedish scholars and debaters during the 60s and 70s drew parallels between the exploitation of Norrland's natural resources and the exploitation of other colonies around the world (see Balgård, 1970; Bäärnhielm, 1976; Lundmark, 1971). The centre-periphery theory of Amin and Frank does not concern the center and periphery as dichotomies but rather as interdependently constructed. For an area to be defined as a periphery, based on the understanding that space is socially constructed, it has to be a periphery in relation to a center. However, the terms center and periphery are used in many different contexts and with very different meanings. For instance, 'peripherality' is associated with 'glesbygd', an area with low population (see e.g. Keskitalo, 2009) and places are represented as more or less peripheral. The official definition of glesbygd is a built-up area with less than 200 inhabitants. Hansen (1998) asserts the striking fact that the concept of glesbygd is described as something it is *not*, something it is lacking. From a political and a planning perspective, the concept of glesbygd is associated with areas that lack resources and are located far from the center. Glesbygd is in turn associated with Norrland (Bylund, 1966).[17]

Stockholm, the nation's capital, may be regarded as the center of Sweden as it is home to Parliament and is the node of most of the country's important business activities. In political and media debates Stockholm and other large urban areas are represented as the nurturing ones while the rural areas are represented as consuming (Svensson, 2006), often including Norrland (Hansen, 1998).

A huge body of geographical literature has focused attention on the making of nations' centers and peripheries when explaining regional differences (Glaeser, 2005), and other research has scrutinized the importance of employment rates, population flows and industrial restructuring (Pred, 1967; Storper, 1997; Eriksson, 2009). Some studies within this field of research have acknowledged identity construction and representations of place as influential in the making of national peripheries, and in the reproduction of regional differentiation as a whole. Gry Paulgaard (2007) highlights the hierarchical order of discourses on the rural and urban in Norway, and asserts that, despite "unfettered mobility" and access to all kinds of cultural prod-

[17] British and American research on the rural is not always applicable to other parts of the world; For instance, the term *countryside* has different connotations in Sweden than, for instance, the UK (for a discussion see Berg & Forsberg, 2003). In Sweden, the rural areas far from the large cities are rarely termed 'countryside' (in Swedish: 'landsbygd') but merely as a 'sparsely populated area' (in Swedish: 'glesbygd'), and 'glesbygd' has no idyllic connotations.

ucts, the lived experience of youth living in the Norwegian rural periphery is that of difference. The British and American research on the 'rural other' have mainly concerned the 'other' within the rural (see, e.g. Cloke and Little eds. 1997) but research by, for instance, Valentine (1997) aims at reworking the hegemonic discourse on rural populations. Little (1997) and Cloke (1997) show how particular socio-cultural identities are bound up in constructions of the rural. Woodward (1996) has investigated issues of 'deprivation' as a constructed feature of the rural other in England and how urban-rural dualism was strengthened in the course of industrialization and modernization.

According to the discussion of modernity, the core understanding of the difference between center and periphery is that the periphery is coded as belonging to a different age from that of the up-to-date center. This notion is used to distinguish not only between different historical periods but also between different geographical areas, such as the rural and the urban. This particular understanding divides the world in both time and space: Space turns into time, geography into history (Massey, 2005). The center/periphery dichotomy needs to be deconstructed as it is often combined with binaries such as future/past and hierarchical orders of places. People produce hierarchical orders among places as a measure of 'degree of modernity' (Paulgaard, 2008). Bærenholdt and Granås (2008:4) discuss the difficulty involved in deconstructing peripherality when youngsters in the far North engage in their world with concepts and binaries such as center/periphery similarly as is done by economic geographers. The frequent use of the terms is also repeatedly shown in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

The upcoming chapters will show how representations of peripheries constantly reemerge, not only because of new projects of re-centering or the construction of new peripheries, but because the periphery is constantly being reproduced as part of identity projects, through attempts to commodify the wild and the 'authentic', in the logic of policy- and news-making. Despite the awareness of representations of the North as primitive, small, peripheral, natural and traditional, 'local' places and projects (for instance, relating to tourism or place marketing), consciously or unconsciously, reinvest in the stereotypes (Guneriussen, 2008). But there are also attempts to rework and resist the reproduction of northern Sweden as peripheral.

# 3. Enduring representations

> "Identities are relational in ways that are *spatio*-temporal. They are indeed bound up with the 'narratives of the past'... and made up by the resources we inherit" (Massey, 2005:192)

This chapter attempts to place my research questions in a boader debate, and relies on secondary sources and aims at showing how discourses on northern Sweden have been reworked, resisted and reenacted over time. I have been forced to select among a vast quantity of material; Thus this chapter, like the empirical ones, is "a creature of my own making" (Gren, 1994:36).

## 3.1 A category

> "Regions, their boundaries, symbols and institutions are hence not results of autonomous and evolutionary processes but expressions of perpetual struggle over the meanings associated with space, representations, democracy and welfare." (Paasi 2002:805)

'Norrland' is not an administrative region. As far as historians know the term Norrland was first mentioned in 1435, but the meaning of this geographical categorization has changed many times and the definition has never been clear-cut. 'Norrland' means 'the land in the North' and since it came into use has been a useful, condensed geographical category (Lundqvist, 1942). Norrland is a combination of different geographies, histories, climates and borders, but Norrland, as scholars such as Sörlin (1988), Loeffler (2005) and Schough (2008) assert, is also a an idea, a metonym and an imagination that is constantly being reproduced, reworked and resisted within numerous discursive networks and in conjunction with other places, particularly with the representations of the nation state.

Norrland is part of a taxonomic practice dividing Sweden into three parts. South of Norrland is central Sweden, known as 'Svealand', and below this lies 'Götaland', or southernmost Sweden. 'Götaland' and 'Svealand' are not used in the same way as 'Norrland'; for instance, people from Götaland do not call themselves Götlandians whereas people from Norrland are known as, and may call themselves, Norrlandians (Sw. Norrlänningar). The areas of Götaland and Svealand are often more narrowly categorized into counties (Sw. län) or provinces (Sw. landskap).

The first Swedish counties were instituted in 1634, and the first to be established in the North was Västernorrland. It was a large area comprising most

of what is now Swedish Norrland, northern Norway and northern Finland.[18] This huge area was rearranged, subdivided and altered for 200 years due to war, or simply to new administrative needs (see Loeffler, 2005). Norrland's western, eastern and northern borders are the results complex and long drawn out conflicts between kingdoms and nation states.

The southern border, on the other hand, has been a matter for science since Linneaus's travels to 'the North' in 1732. Several geographers and ethnologists have studied boundaries between the North and the South based on geographical, hydrological, climatological and cultural criteria (see e.g. De Geer, 1918; Loeffler, 2005). The concept of 'Limes Norrlandicus' was widely used to describe the border between the North and the South. The southern border of Norrland is also a regional administrative construction but happens to roughly coincide with the Limes Norrlandicus (Sw. kulturgräns or odlingsgräns). Archeologist David Loeffler (2005) has written on the construction of the Limes Norrlandicus, and asserts that:

> "Although climate, hydrology, geography and other natural conditions must surly play their part, they would only have done so within a complex cultural milieu in combination with long term historical processes. But this is not an explanation, rather it is a recognition of the complexity of the problem. Thus we arrive, rather embarrassingly, at the brink of our knowledge and understanding of this seemingly enduring border zone. We realize its existence but the cause or causes behind it are still as elusive as ever." David Loeffler (2005:34)

Drawing on the research of Loeffler (2005) on the prehistory of Norrland, one might suggest that the discourse on the North as wild and empty has obscured our knowledge about the past but also about the present. The construction of the Limes Norrlandicus with its relative location may partly explain why the present geographical definition, in the case of Norrland and northern Sweden, not is entirely clear or agreed upon (Sörlin, 1988).

> "Neither from a physical-geographical nor from an anthropogeographical point of view is Norrland a natural, sharply defined territory." (Ahlmann, 1921:98)

Schough (2008) and Loeffler (2002) show how different parts of Sweden were coded in different ways in terms of nature/culture; Areas that were considered culture were to be found in the South, while those regarded as

[18] With the exception of Gästrikland, Härjedalen and Jämtland, the latter two were part of the kingdom of Denmark-Norway.

nature and in need of protection were located in the North. Cultural boundaries (such as Limes Norrlandicus) were initially a way for geographers to 'detect' and draw 'natural' borders between and within culture and nature, but also regarding cultivation. At the beginning of the 1900s the area (nature) above the cultivation boundary needed to be conquered, mapped and protected by the mobile and cultural hyperboré[19] (see Schough, 2008: 86).

The defined borders of Norrland are a relatively recent development, brought on by internal and external governmental logics and historical developments together with modern administrative requirements. The map of Norrland has been altered and adjusted over time "just as scientific facts are produced through the overlay and repetition of circulating references" (Pickles, 2004:5). Today Sweden consists of 21 counties, and in territorial terms Norrland refers to the five northernmost counties – Gävleborg, Västernorrland, Jämtland, Västerbotten and Norrbotten – or to the provinces of Norrbotten, Lappland, Västerbotten, Ångermanland, Medelpad, Jämtland, Härjedalen, Hälsingland and Gästrikland. Norrland is also divided into smaller administrative entities, municipalities. While the division of Sweden into counties and municipalities is relatively new and mostly refers to administrative realities, the division into provinces is an older practice and seems to refer to places Swedes today identify with (Loeffler, 2005).[20]

Despite all these different possibilities for categorization, Norrland is always 'the North'. These representations of Norrland have produced a dual terminology. On the one hand there is the North, which consists of what is traditionally known as Norrland. In contrast, the remainder of Sweden is simply referred to as 'the South' (Sw. södra Sverige). Loeffler states that there naturally exist differences between Götaland and Svealand but the inhabitants of the two regions have, in comparison to those of Norrland, shown an ability to acquire, accumulate, exercise and exert economic, social, ideological or political influence and power to the advantage of the respective regions that exceed Norrland's capabilities.

Boundaries must necessarily include and exclude, hide and ignore, local and regional distinctiveness. Like any large region, Norrland is less homogenous than what categorization allows for. For example, when defining Norrland the county of Gävleborg is sometimes excluded, whereas the county of Dalarna sometimes is included from the definition of Norrland (Loeffler, 2005).

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[19] For Schough (2008:13), hyperboré is a discourse on Sweden and the North as being culturally superior and as a peaceful bearer of culture.

[20] With the exception of when counties and provinces mainly coincide, as in the case of Jämtland. The counties of Västerbotten and Norrbotten have identical names as provinces, but the province of Lappland is part of both the counties of Västerbotten and Norrbotten.

Figure 5: *Carta Marina*, Map of the Nordic Countries, by Olaus Magnus in the early 16th century, the most accurate depiction of its time. *Carta Marina* can be regarded as a forerunner to Olaus Magnus' great work, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (A History of the Nordic People), printed in Rome in 1555. In his work he greatly idealized the North and advocated for the colonization of a mythical Swedish North. His work long remained the authority on Swedish matters in Europe.

The map is on display in the exhibition hall at Uppsala University library, Carolina Rediviva.

Figure 6: A road crossing the Dal River (Sw. Dalälven), according to some Swedes the border to Norrland. Own photo taken in 2009.

Depending on context, Norrland will be given different meanings and thereby different definitions, which is important when one realizes that Norrland comprises about 60% of the whole of Sweden and covers an area approximately 1,030 kilometers long. If we divide Sweden into two equal halves, 90% of the country's population is in the southern half. This uneven population distribution is, historically, a consequence of a scarcity of cultivated land and a large inaccessible mountain range in the North[21]. The territory of Norrland has nearly 1.2 million inhabitants, most of the population living in the coastal areas, which leaves large inland areas largely uninhabited. The largest town in Norrland is Umeå, with a population of 114,075 within the municipality (Statistic Sweden, 2009) and more than 75,000 within the city (Statistics Sweden, 2005).

Norrbotten in the north and Jämtland in the west have the lowest population rates and the lowest population density in Norrland. It is important to emphasize that some of the counties consist of both dynamic and growing cities, even in relation to cities in other parts of Sweden. Consequently, there are great differences in terms of population and economic and social develop-

[21] In contrast to many other European mountain ranges, the western Scandinavian mountains are rather rolling (Loeffler, 2005).

ment between inland and coastal areas.[22] There are not merely considerable differences between the five counties of Norrland, but also between the municipalities within the counties. Even today Norrland is categorized as a region of out-migration, although there are very few parts of Norrland that fit this description. Most parts do not differ from other parts of Sweden, considering current migration patterns (Håkansson 2000; Nordin, 2007; Hjort and Malmberg 2006). The population of the rural parts of Norrland is decreasing in a similar way as the rural population in the whole of Sweden has declined since the mid-1900s. This decrease is mainly a consequence of demographical factors such as an elderly population, but also a lack of inmigration. The metropolitan areas have increased in population at the expense of practically all other areas in Sweden.[23]

The use of Norrland as a category is often a source of discontent among those living there, since it generalizes a large geographical area without taking into consideration the nuances and differences within the region (Öhman, 2001). Said (1978) calls this a "summational statement"; when geographical areas are generalized and the entire population, regarded as homogenous, is painted with one brush. This may be part of a colonial practice whereby "The political and economic elite have the power to produce representations of a region and gradually construct the reality they suggested in 'things and words'" (Paasi 2002:805).

## 3.2 Colonialism within the nation

In the middle of the 1600s the Crown initiated a plan to increase migration to the North by giving settlers various benefits such as years of freedom from taxes. The settlements were initially intended to secure Lappland, as a Swedish territory, from invasion by Russia and to increase the nation's cultivated land and let the area serve as a future tax base. However, importantly, the interest in the North was also motivated by a colonial perspective: It was 'natural' for the nation to expand geographically and economically – the

[22] Unemployment rates: Västerbotten 8.1%, Norrbotten 9.5%, Gävleborg 10.1%, Jämtland 8.7%, Västernorrland 9%, national average 8.3% (Statistics Sweden 2009) Please note! In 2007 a new EU-harmonized LFS (Labor Force Survey) was introduced. This caused a break in comparability over time, for more information see Statistics Sweden (2009). Rates differ considerably between municipalities within the counties. The counties in Norrland also have the largest shares of people receiving sickness benefits; Thus, in analyzing on a municipality level and controlling for gender, age, industry and branch, we discover a much more complex pattern. For example, in 2004 one of the municipalities in Norrland, together with two other municipalities in the very South, had the smallest share of people receiving sickness benefits (Statistics Sweden, 2004).

[23] A common misconception expressed by the media as well as researchers is that women are fleeing Norrland in great numbers, leaving all the men behind (Nordin, 2007; Hansen, 1998). Forsberg (1994; 2001) shows that gender inequality is associated with rural areas in Sweden, asserting that this discourse is linked to the hierarchical relationship between the urban and the rural analyzed by scholars such as Rose (1993), Hatty (2000) and Little (2002).

wealth produced in the area was not intended to benefit the North (Sörlin, 1988). The colonization also included violent attempts to christen and 'civilize' the Sámi people. Lundmark (2002) focused on the treatment of the Sámi population when parts of Norrland were colonized, showing the racism and discrimination that resulted in a disunited Sámi community. The contemporary debate concerning the Sámi is very much linked to the ILO convention 169[24] and land-use conflicts not only between non-Sámi and Sámi people in Norrland, but also between the Sámi and the state and businesses, who exploit the natural resources. These disputes still get a great deal of attention, as the different conflicts are very complex and go far back in history to when the state divided the land between the Sámi and the non-Sámi. The state gave different privileges to different groups of Sámi: the reindeer-herders in the mountain regions, the reindeer-herders in the forest, and the Sámi people without reindeers (see Lundmark, 1998; Lantto, 2000).[25]

The population increase in Norrland was greater than anywhere else in Sweden during 1750-1800. However, the living conditions for the new settlers were harsh and many suffered hardships, merely because of the climate and poor soil. Naturally, it was not the rich who voluntarily moved to Norrland to settle in a place with the absence of basic infrastructure. The new settlers were given certain benefits, but were also obliged to cultivate the land no matter the poor conditions. Hunting and fishing were regarded as morally wrong, but the settlers depended on these for their livelihood (Arell, 1979).

In the spirit of colonialism the Sámi people, but also Finnish-speaking Swedes near the Finnish border, were considered and treated as inferior to the "Swedish race" (Broberg, 1975; Elenius, 2006). When Finland won its independence in 1917, the Finnish-speaking Swedes were regarded with suspicion, their national loyalty was questioned and they were forced to learn and speak Swedish (Elenius, 2006).

As already pointed out, and as I will continue to argue, the people who were sent to the North to colonize the area subsequently themselves also became objects of internal colonialism (cf. Foucault, 2005).

[24] The ILO convention 169 aims at strengthening the rights of indigenous populations but has not yet been ratified by the Swedish government.

[25] One apparent problem when talking about the Sámi and their rights concerns the issue of ethnicity, which became an even more severe problem when the state attempted to set rules regarding who to include and exclude in the Sámi population (Lundmark, 1998).

### *3.2.1 A Swedish Klondike*

The population of Norrland doubled from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s. The in-migrants settled mainly in rural areas, where the natural resources were located. As industrialization accelerated in the mid-nineteenth century, the notion of Norrland changed dramatically. Sörlin (1988) describes the identity of the nation at that time as dependent on developments in science, art, technology and production which, in turn, were dependent on the rich natural resources in Norrland. However, representations of Norrland such as 'Sweden's West Indies' and 'Sweden's Gold Coast' indicate that it was still considered separate from the rest of Sweden and was first and foremost represented as a colony where nature had been conquered (see e.g. Balgård, 1970). Included in the colonization project were not only the expropriation and exploitation of resources but also the protection of domestic nature.

Figure 7: The symbol of the province of Lappland, 'The Wild Man'

Norrland was still surrounded by dreams and myths. But at the same time as these mythical representations of Norrland circulated, visions existed of Norrland as a place where people could live enduringly. These visions aimed at offering alternate versions of modernization, and called for state ownership of natural resources and advocated for regional and local control of these resources by the population of Norrland. As already mentioned in the previous chapter on Swedish modernization, Norrland played an important part in the debate concerning the transformation of Sweden from an agrarian country to an industrialized and modernized nation ('the Norrland Question'). Sörlin (1988) focused on the different views articulated concerning the future of Norrland and the idea debate on modernization and its affect on nature and ways of life. Sörlin suggests that these ideas could be seen as re-

sponses to the mining and forestry companies' management of people and nature in Norrland. This became evident when the labor movement first mobilized in Norrland due to the hard and often dangerous work in the forest and the mines. The great economic expansion, the considerable land reclamation, the railway constructions, the poor working conditions, and the first great strike in the industrial town of Sundsvall in 1879 resulted in national media debates and representations of Norrland as "a Swedish Klondike" (Sörlin, 1988:179).

Thus, the Swedish labor movement has a long history in Norrland, as many famous labor conflicts and strikes have taken place in northern Sweden.[26] However, the depression after World War I had a harmful effect on the industries in Norrland and suddenly the area also had to deal with these problems. The production of raw materials underwent a structural transformation, which dramatically reduced the need for labour in the forestry and mining industry. The urbanization process during the twentieth century resulted in an extensive population decrease in the northern inland of Sweden (Nyström, 1982). The modernization process, including industrialization, urbanization and the decline of agrarian self-sufficiency, had an apparent effect on rural areas in many nations, for instance Italy (e.g. Brunori and Rossi, 2007) and England (Massey, 1984). In Sweden in the middle of the twentieth century, this resulted in unemployment followed by out-migration; However, the widest migratory flows remained within the region and people from the inland areas of Norrland primarily moved to northern urban or semi-urban areas (Håkansson, 2000; Hansen, 1998). As late as in 1938, the population of Norrland was significantly poorer than the rest of the Swedish population (Sörlin, 1988).

## 3.3 The political shift

In the building of the Swedish welfare state, the vision included an equal-opportunity landscape with similar accessibility to service, jobs and education for everyone (SOU, 2000). Hence, the stated objective of the official policy was to eradicate major regional disparities in income, employment chances and service supply; to create equal life chances for all citizens, independent of residential region; and to keep and obtain the same living condi-

[26] For instance, the 'Ådalen riots' in 1931. This was a series of events in and around the sawmill district of Ådalen, Kramfors municipality, in the county of Västernorrland. During a protest, five people were killed by bullets fired by Swedish military troops called in by the police as reinforcement. The protest was a response to an outdrawn industrial conflict over pay reductions. The events spawned a raging national debate, deeply divided along political lines. The political Left called the shootings "murder", while the Right claimed that the military had been forced to open fire to defend themselves and the strikebreakers from the rage of the demonstrators (Norman, 1981).

tions in Stockholm as in Norrland. However, the promotion of economic restructuring throughout the country was the key policy measure for maintaining economic growth on a national level. Thus, as a result of the Glesbygdsutredning (1972) and the forest and agricultural policy in the 60s, the idea of regional equality of chances was traded for the national goals of economic growth, high profits for capitalists, increasing average incomes for workers and developed welfare institutions. Flat income distribution combined with increasing real wages and high profits were parts of the social democratic vision of growth and equality. But this accelerated the closedowns of labor-intensive industries and promoted capital-intensive production, resulting in a regionally differentiated economic growth, spatial disparities in labor demand and a concentration of employment chances to the metropolitan regions. As a consequence, remote regions experienced high unemployment rates, population decline and a disappearance of service supply. In order to ease the consequences of the regional economic restructuring and calm the angry protests from out-migration regions, the regional policy program became an essential piece in the program of the welfare state (SOU, 2000). In the 1960s and 1970s, Sweden's regional policy included economic subsidies to stimulate the localization or maintenance of production in regions that experienced high unemployment and the closedown of key industries.

According to Bylund (1966), the localization policy was a failure since it failed to distinguish between Norrland's inland and coastal areas. The policy only stimulated businesses in the coastal areas, which resulted in an accelerated out-migration from the rural areas to the urban areas by the coast; Consequently, the glesbygd was depopulated using state funding (Bylund, 1966; Hansen, 1998).

The regional policy from 1964 was summarized like this by former Prime Minister, Tage Erlander:

> "What you could call an ideological chain of adaptation is now fully developed. 'The individual' should conform to 'business', which should conform to 'modern society', which should conform to 'international competition'. The very development that leads to displacement and 'adaptation difficulties' is regarded at its base as both necessary and desirable." (Erlander 1978:65, Quoted in Hansen, 1998:49 my transl.)

The debate on the new regional policies engaged many researchers and politician, the debate was called the 'Norrland debate'. Most organizations and debaters from trade and industry viewed the depopulation of Norrland as 'natural' and as inescapable, but the debate also concerned social conse-

quences of the depopulation and concentration. These quotes belove illustrate the state of Norrland during this time, but also that similar problems targeted other parts of Sweden:

> "The most important of these circumstances can be said to be that the need for new employment is proportionally so much greater in Norrland than in other parts of the country. This in turn is because, even into the modern day, fertility has been higher in Norrland than in the rest of the country. This especially applies to Norrland's northernmost parts. In other words, they have a strong natural population increase. At the same time, just like in the rest of the country, the area's need for human labor in agriculture and forestry is declining." (Albinsson et al., 1964:14 own transl.)

> "The Norrlandic industry has been dominated and is still dominated to a high degree by the heavy primary industries. Against this, the Norrlandic business world is otherwise currently having a very hard time absorbing this enormous stream of job applicants…these difficulties can hardly be said to be unique to Norrland. Similar problems exist in other remote parts of our country, and in very large and above all the most populous parts of Norrland it doesn't appear as if it could be said that any specific Norrlandic problems exist." (Albinsson et al., 1964:14-15 own transl.)

In the 1960-70s, a movement mushroomed in the spirit of non-capitalism and non-rationalism, its campaigners opposed to the industries' demand for a mobile workforce that left people no choice but to move to urban areas, and rejecting the strict economic rationality articulated by politicians and businesspeople. Some of these ideas were articulated by Swedish debaters using book titles that speak for themselves, for instance Bäärnhielms *I Norrland hava vi Indien* (Eng. In Norrland we have an India), 1976; Balgård *Angår det Sverige om Norrland finns?* (Eng. Does it Concern Sweden Whether Norrland Exists? own transl.), 1970; Nilsson *Sveket mot Norrland* (Eng. The Betrayal of Norrland, own transl.), 1969; Bergner *Detta djävla Norrland* (Eng. This Damned Norrland, own transl.), 1971. During this time several Swedish authors with strong connections to the working class and Norrland, so-called proletarian writers, became known. For instance, Eyvind Johnson (1900-1976), Helmer Grundström (1904-1986) and Sara Lidman (1923-2004) described the ambiance in Norrland during the time of industrialization and modernization. These books came to be important in the general debate and in everyday people's understanding of the living conditions in Norrland from the 1800s and forward.

The work of Sara Lidman deserves to be looked at a bit closer. Some of her most famous books (*Tjärdalen* (Eng. The Tar Valley), 1953; *Hjortronlandet* (Eng. The Land of Cloudberries), made visible the poor and hard-working farmers in Norrland during the nineteenth century. She also examined the effects of modernization and industrialization on the lives of people in the county of Västerbotten. Moreover, Lidman became engaged early-on in the criticism of colonialism and the Vietnam War. Her work on Vietnam's behalf influenced public opinion both in Sweden and abroad. Like scholars employing the centre-periphery theory at home, Lidman realized that oppression was not merely something that happened in other countries. She brought the treatment of the miners of Svappavaara and Kiruna to light in *Gruva* (Eng. Mine, 1968). According to Holm (1998), Lidman's book contributed to a miner strike and concrete political change. Lidman became important to Norrland literature, especially in Västerbotten, and during the 1950s the area as well as its authors dominated the Swedish literary scene, with celebrated authors such as Torgny Lindgren and Per Olov Enquist.

Documentary photos by Sune Jonsson (1930-2009), together with the work of Norrland authors in the 50s and 60s, portrayed the remaining small-scale farmers and forestry workers just before this type of livelihood disappeared forever (Balgård, 2007) (see figure 8 and 9). Many of these publications insisted on putting Norrland, the glesbygd and its inhabitants (workers) at the center of the story of Swedish modernization (see Bränström Öhman, 2008, on the writings of Sara Lidman). At the same time these pamphlets, debate books, history novels and photos of the poor barren North, portraying authentic but hard-working people, became dominant in the popular discourse on Norrland and remained so for a long time ahead.

In the 70s and onward, criticism of the government came to concern its inability to stop the out-migration from Norrland. This criticism materialized in campaigns such as 'Hela Sverige ska leva'[27] in the 80s and 'Vi flytt int' ' (Eng. 'We're not movin') in the 60s, but also by way of organizations promoting Norrland such as the Glesbygdsdelegationen in 1977 and Norrlandsförbundet in 1952. Norrlandsförbundet[28] is known for initiating the 'Vi flytt int' ' campaign, which was a protest to the political current toward urbanization and a mobile labor force. Norrlandsförbundet is still a strong lobby organization, with approximately 6,000 members, and deals with issues related to the northern part of Sweden. The organization seeks to improve the general

[27] 'The whole of Sweden should live' became a national movement and a strong lobby organization. The movement is still very much alive, but is less influential that in the past. URL: http://www.helasverige.se/doc.ccm?id=174 [accessed on 6 May 2008].

[28] Norrlandsförbundet is a lobby organization, with approximately 6,000 members, that deals with issues related to the northern part of Sweden.

public knowledge of Norrland, and to support business and culture in the region.

Figure 8: Knaften 1962. Two eras side by side. A horse drawn sled and a tractor. Photo by Sune Jonsson. With permission from Västerbottensmuséet.

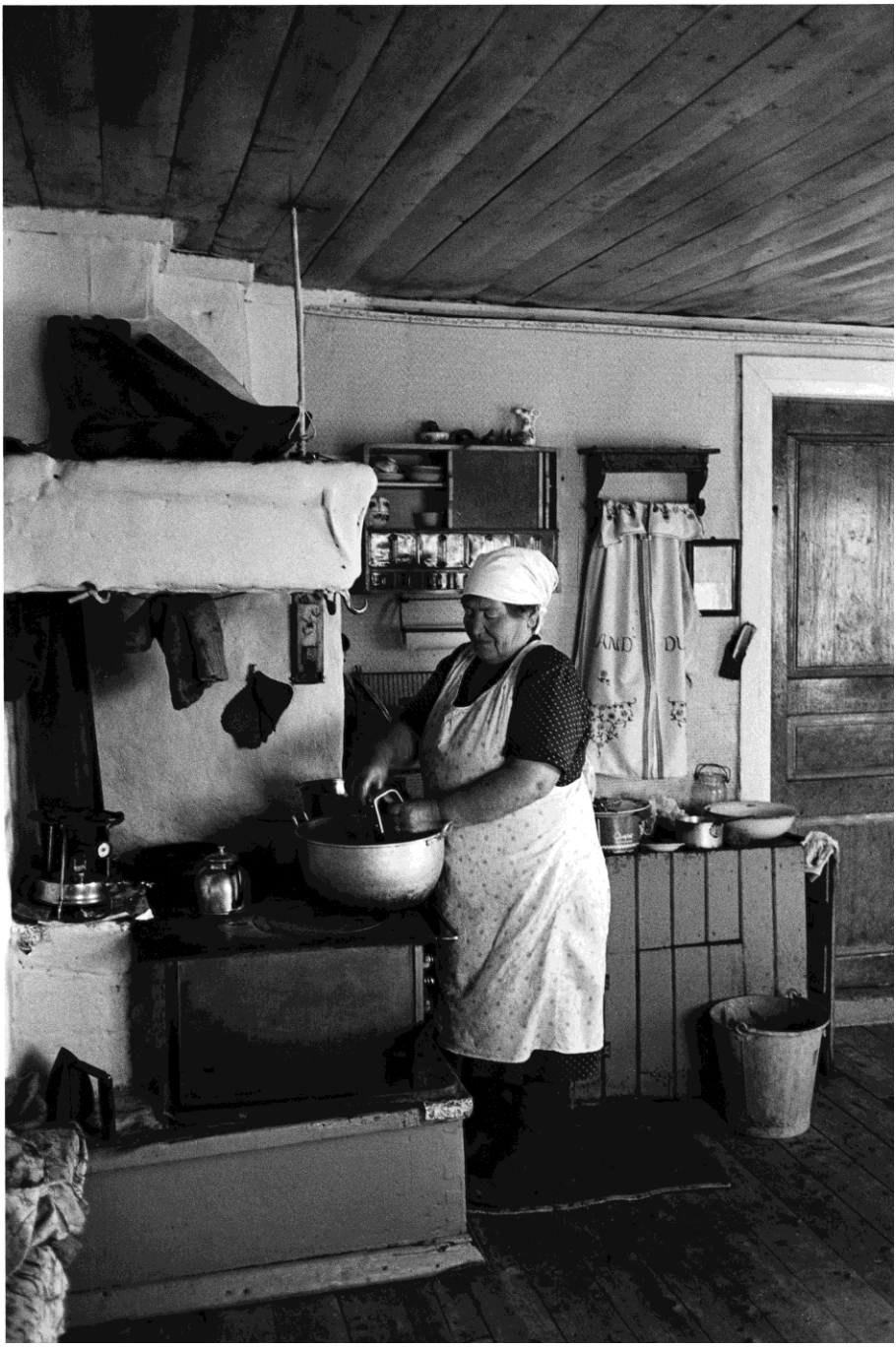

Figure 9: Hunneberg 1961. The kitchen of Katarina and Gustaf Karlsson. Photo by Sune Jonnson. With permission from Västerbottensmuséet.

Figure 10: The 'Vi flytt int' campaign is still part of the geographical imagination of Norrland. The discourse on the Norrlander as backward and unwilling to move is apparent in this advertising for distance learning. The young man with snuff under his lip is dressed typically as a lumberjack, ready to go out to hunt in the forest. Own photo taken in March 2008.

As already mentioned, the regional policy changed from an aid program to one of public investment during the 1970s and 1980s. Infrastructure investments as well as the geographical dispersion of the growing public sector became the major strategy for hampering regional polarization in the country. The growing public sector provided new employment wherever people lived, and the out-migration that was so dramatic in the 1960s slowed in the 1970s and remained low in the 1980s. But the arguments for increasing flexibility on the labor market and the need to restructure the peripheral economy became increasingly influential in the public debate (VINNOVA 2007).

In 1977, Glesbygdsdelegationen was given the task of examining the particular problems people in sparsely populated areas experience, such as a lack of accessibility to employment and different services. The delegation became part of the 'Hela Sverige ska leva' campaign, which grew into the national Swedish Village Action Movement, consisting of about 4,700 members and typically engaging people who face local crisis, for example when a factory shuts down or a school closes. In 1991 Glesbygdsdelegation became Glesbygdsverket, a government agency. Glesbygdsverket first focused on democracy issues and on initiating pilot projects, and was also represented on the board of 'Hela Sverige ska leva'. Later in 1998, it became more of an analytic department and left its place on the board of 'Hela Sverige ska leva'. In 2009, Glesbygdsverket closed down and was replaced by Tillväxtverket (the Agency for Economic and Regional Growth) and Myndigheten för tillväxtpolitiska utvärderingar och analyser (the Agency for Growth Policy Analysis). These transformations of government agencies can be considered to be in line with the growth discourse on neoliberal policies (Helldahl, 2008; Pierre, 2004).

Glesbygdsverket was disliked by many groupings, especially those focusing on problems in urban areas, and was often criticized for being a lobby group for the rural and social democratic Sweden; this criticism can to some extent be regarded as valid, since Glesbygdsverket was a social democratic product and the head of the board had been appointed by the government.

> "The development has resulted in Sweden having a number of authorities that devote most of their operations to managing ideological campaigns. An example is Glesbygdsverket, which was established in 1991." (Rothstein, 2004:299 own transl.)

Social democratic politicians from the Stockholm area also initiated a debate about Glesbygdsverket that put the rural/urban binary at the forefront:

> "A big city agency that collected information on the area and worked to drive the big cities' development would be an important instrument in eventually getting to the bottom of the big cities' great problems. Since there's an agency for the glesbygd there should also be one for the big cities. The big cities' problems are at least as great and are going to grow as the population becomes more and more concentrated." (*Dagens Nyheter* 5 September, 1999 own transl.)

The Swedish welfare state had been organized around the ideals of a redistributive policy, with progressive taxation and a reduction of income inequality and poverty achieved in part through the provision of elaborate welfare services (Harvey 2005). Like in almost all advanced and capitalist societies in the 1960s, many regulatory reforms took place in Sweden, with the aim of steadily reducing the significance of private ownership and of building toward collective ownership managed by representatives of the workers. Hence, beginning in the 1970s, the Swedish Employers' Federation mobilized and launched a propaganda campaign against excessive regulation and for an increasing liberalization of the economy, a reduction of the tax burden, and the rolling back of excessive welfare state commitments.

### *3.3.1 All of Sweden?*

Neoliberalism and neoliberal globalization are often portrayed as an extremist laissez-faire political-economic philosophy that rejects any sort of government intervention in the economy. As is the case with most over-used terms, it is more complicated than this. Blyth (2002) asserts that there exists a variety of neoliberalisms that share a common emphasis on the role of the market, but that beyond this its usages and applications appear much more varied according to the cultural, economic, political and social context in which it is used (Blyth, 2002). Drawing from Tickell and Peck (2003:166), who define neoliberalization as "the mobilization of state power in the contradictory extension and reproduction of market (like) rule", the following section deals with the specific and the general of Swedish neoliberalism.

One step toward a more neoliberal policy came with the election of a conservative government in 1991, but the way had already been prepared by the Social Democrats, who were increasingly apt to find neoliberal ideas in the economic stagnation (Helldahl, 2008; Ryner 1997; Neilson, 2006).[29] When a

[29] According to Ryner (2004: 98,99), the removal of controls over capital markets in 1985 marked the beginning of Swedish neoliberalism. Schwartz (1994) argues that Finance Minister Kjell-Olof Feldt's department (1982-90) "followed a typical neoliberal line". The government's regressive tax reforms were modeled on those introduced by the conservative Reagan government in the US (Pontusson 1994: 35, 36). In the early 1990s, the SAP adopted "a whole series of new policy initiatives that departed from traditional Social Democratic policy commitments and this, according to Pontusson (1994), represented an embrace of bourgeois

crisis hit Swedish economy at the beginning of the 1990s, the blame was placed on the inefficiencies of the welfare state and the conservative government initiated a policy of deregulation and privatization. The measures taken toward joining the EU can be understood as an "attempt by business and the Conservatives to let the economic ideas and institutions of the EU achieve by international convergence what they had failed to do through domestic reforms" (Harvey, 2005:114). In 1995, Membership in the EU made it impossible to return to the path of full employment and to advance the social wage (Ryner, 2002). The Social Democrats won the election in 1994 and continued the neoliberal path of "deficit reduction, inflation control and balanced budgets rather than full employment and an equitable distribution of income" (Harvey, 2005:115, see also Pred 2000:15).[30] These measures were accepted as inevitable, and Harvey (2005:115) interprets this as "a logic of decision-making" driven by hegemonic ideas of neoliberalism.

A vital prerequisite for maintaining nationwide support for the social democratic policy was to justify the policy of regional restructuring; to make it fair and acceptable not only to the residents of the regions experiencing economic decline. One way to find support for the policy was to modify the economic restructuring and to slow down the process of closedowns through subsidies to labor-intensive or non-competitive industries. One major argument for justifying a generous redistributive regional policy is that the closedown of industries and the economic restructuring result from 'external forces of the global economy' and from national policies that are mainly out of the control of the local population (see Tickell and Peck, 2006). It is thus fair to compensate the regions and people most affected, in the Swedish case the northern peripheries, for loss of jobs and services (see Hansen, 1998). Drawing on Neilson (2006) and Ryner (2002), another strategy was the Third Way, or neoliberalized social democracy:

> "The overall goal was to achieve, practically and discursively, not only a virtuous determining relation from productivity/competitiveness to

policy prescriptions" (Pontusson 1992: 307 - 308). After failing to get parliamentary approval for Feldt's plans to freeze wages and prices and forbid trade union strikes in 1990 (Hancock 2003: 390), the SAP choose instead to cut welfare entitlements and other forms of public spending (Pontusson 1994: 37).

[30] When the Social Democratic party returned to power in 1994 after three years in the Opposition, then-SAP Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson "in essence…affirmed a neoliberal reorientation of public policy" (Hancock 2003:393). Many neoliberal dealings was introduced, comprising tax increases and spending cuts, labor market effects such as "responsible pay agreements", and structural changes to economic policy, independence for the central bank and limits on public expenditure. The SAP reduced compensation rates for parental leave and for sickness and unemployment benefits, halved benefits for orphans, and administered significant cuts and a decline in the quality of other social services (Verlin Laatikainen 2000:162, see also Lavelle 2008).

solidarity/welfare, but, moreover, a virtuous determining relationship from solidarity to competiveness." (Neilson 2006:19)[31]

The strategy was to take power over the discourse; to gain acceptance for growing spatial disparities. In the latter case one may assert that the representation of the periphery, its population and their rights and obligations, was crucial; a tool for remaking people's notion of the periphery. The representation of Norrland as the disadvantaged region was essential in justifying the regional support (Hansen, 1998) and, similarly, the questioning of the regional support to regions unable to support themselves was crucial for those who opposed the governmental interference and who argued for neoliberal solutions to the restructuring of Norrland's economy.

After the economic crisis of the 1990s, demands for market adjustment were heard again. One major idea in the regional policy investigation of 2000 was that the policy should support regional diversity and help strengthen regional comparative advantages, and that all parts of the country should contribute to the growth; This was a change from a regional policy strategy of 'All Sweden should live' to one of '*All Sweden should provide growth*' (ITPS, 2005). It was the responsibility of provinces and their population to create the growth and the welfare. Compensation for disadvantaged demographic or geographic structures, as well as for economic restructuring in the global economy, was no longer considered a major task for regional policy.

In the contemporary public debate, Norrland is often characterized as a region in need of financial support and as a region incapable of managing on its own, but also as a region deprived of its assets by way of neocolonial strategies (Loeffler, 2005). The discourse on northern Sweden has been reinforced and (re)produced by processes of restructuring in industry and unsuccessful social engineering that proceeded in the path and ideals of industrial modernity (Hansen, 1998). The issues of regional income distribution, regional subsidies and dependency on allowances have now more than ever come to be associated with Norrland (see e.g. SOU, 2004:135).

From time to time political movements, organizations and parties mushroom as the result of contemporary Norrland debates. The local parties with their strong regional focus are by and large to be found in Norrbotten. Local

[31] Finance Minister Pär Nuder conceded that one distinction between Social Democrats and conservatives in Sweden was 'erased' when: "we Social Democrats [were] influenced by the neoliberalism of the 1980s without being fully aware of it" (Nuder, 2004, quoted in Lavelle, 2008:5) A widespread sense of disillusionment with social democracy's abandonment of traditional policies in favor of neoliberal ones has contributed to the Social Democrats' (SAPs') recent electoral problems, including their defeat in the 2006 elections (Lavelle 2008).

political parties such as Norrlandspartiet, Kirunapartiet, Norrbottens sjukvårdsparti and Norrbottenspartiet can all be called 'parties of discontent'.[32] The parties lead a languishing existence; Nevertheless, Kirunapartiet, Norrbottens sjukvårdsparti and Norrbottenspartiet have received strong support in the municipality of Kiruna and have had some influence on the local and national debate concerning regional politics and Norrland. In times of election these local parties tend to reappear; Recently, in March 2010, Norrländska Samlingspartiet was registered with famous athletes and artists originating from Norrland as spokespersons (Norrländska Samlingspartiet, 2010). The newly founded Landsbygdspartiet (Eng. the Countryside party) has some resemblance to the local political parties presented above. Landsbygdspartiet is critical of what they experience as an urban norm in Swedish politics:

> "Our understanding is that the politics thus far conducted from Parliament have completely forgotten the rural areas. We want to make improvements when it comes to basic infrastructure, service and culture. We want to do this by letting profits from forest, ore and energy production be of use to the rural population." (Landsbygdsdemokraterna, 2010, own transl.)

A political party with the explicit agenda of shedding light on issues affecting people in the countryside may be a reaction to the current city-oriented political parties. The political party Centern originally focused on issues concerning the countryside, but has changed direction and, according to many critics, has abandoned its original ideology. This may be a consequence of the urban turn within both research and politics. This absence of a political alternative for the countryside may explain the new parties focused on Norrland and the countryside and the apparent urban-rural polarization in party politics.

As briefly shown in this section, organizations and local parties in Norrland still express concern over marginalization, as well as a reluctance and resistance toward the authority in Stockholm. These groups typically request expanded regional and local governance. The fear of having governing bodies even further away was one of the main objectives conveyed by many Norr-

[32] Registered political parties in Norrbotten, 2010:
Kommunisterna, Gällivare and Piteå
Alternativet, Jokkmokk
Samernas Väl, Jokkmokk
Kalixpartiet , Kalix
Landsbygdspartiet Oberoende, Luleå
Kirunapartiet, county of Norrbotten
Norrbottens Frihandelsparti, county of Norrbotten
Norrbottens Sjukvårdsparti, county of Norrbotten

landians in 1994, when facing the question of a European Union membership; The distance to Stockholm seemed far enough (DN 2 January, 1997).

Figure 11: Some Norrlandians are positive to the EU. The text on the car above says: A vote for Norrland: Vote Yes. The text is most likely a remnant from the 1994 EU referendum. Own photo taken in October 2008.

In the 2006 national Parliament election, a new alliance of conservative and liberal parties won a majority. Hence, among the 54 municipalities in Norrland only ten municipalities gave the local conservative and liberal parties a majority (Statistics Sweden, 2006). When it comes to Parliament elections, the difference in voting turnout between some parts of northern Sweden and the nation as a whole is apparent, with left-wing parties enjoying a faithful voting base in the Norrland constituencies.

This Swedish internal center/periphery debate is still alive, and can fire up whenever issues of regional distribution and fairness are discussed on TV shows, on Facebook[33] or in the news media, or among scholars, artists and politicians.[34] The more radical ideas, originating from the beginning of

[33] The Facebook group "Fuck you I am from Norrland" has nearly 39,000 members (Facebook, 2010). What its members have in common is that they, in different ways, identify with Norrland. The most frequent topics discussed are "Words people from the south do not understand", "The capital of Norrland", and "Where is the border?". Discussions mainly concern definitions of Norrland and what words, traditions and foods are to be considered genuinely Norrlandic. Like any other Facebook group, "Fuck you I am from Norrland" deals with both serious and entertaining matters. All topics can be answered and commented on with hints of irony and patriotic connotations.

[34] See, e.g., the proposed motion to Parliament1991/92:N406 by Laila Strid-Jansson; For peripheral Norrland in literature see Öhman, 2001; Reality shows such as *Frusna män* (Eng. Frozen Men) and *Allt för byn* (Eng. Everything for the Village) deal with (and reproduce) differences of rural Norrland.

1900s, such as those suggesting autonomy from the rest of Sweden or those comparing Norrland with other colonies, are still sometimes used by debaters as rhetorical tricks with serious connotations. Yet, in some aspects, the contemporary artistic and literary Norrland debate has some resemblance to the old 'indignation literature' and the center/periphery writings of the 60s and 70s. Music groups like Glesbygd'n[35] and Euskefeurat and authors like Bengt Pojhanen are examples of radical debaters and artists who address the present Norrland question from a center/periphery perspective. Similarly to the earlier writings, these debaters and artists are bringing up issues of exploitation of natural resources and colonization, as well as the divides between Norrland and Stockholm and between capitalists and workers.

35 The reggae band Glesbygd'n come from Västerbotten and Norrbotten, and write lyrics that reflect a resistance to powerful decision makers. The band sings in a Norrland dialect and their lyrics draw on historical conflicts as well as current affairs.

Sångtext från Glesbygd'n, från albumet Ärtes jord'n (2008),
"Låt det ligga (ve Storsien)":

*"du tro int att de händer här*
*du tro du är trygg*
*men dom gräv upp våran bakgård nu*
*ve tillstånd fått av staten*
*för malmen dom tog va inte nog*
*så bryträttighet åt högstbjudanden*
*men de dom schliter upp ur moder jord*
*är fröen till kärnvapen*

*hiroshima, tjernobyl borde ha lett till en annan plan*
*inte bara stoppa sånt i länder som iran*
*mitt budskap nu till varje europé och amerikan:*
*sluta att skjuta och sluta missbruka uran*
*varför måste storsvensken göra samma sak?*
*upprepa andras fatala misstag*
*skicka hellre alla era uranföretag*
*för att gräva upp slott och riksdag*
*i australien fördrev dom aboriginer*
*i kanada fördrevs en massa indianer*
*där dom nu vill göra plats för likadana minor*
*där bor ju norrländska bönder och samer*
*uran försvinn du bara förstärker bombfobin*
*men sol och vind, ni ger mig skön energi*
*att stoppa storsvensken i hans vinstfrosseri*
*och lära honom att Norrland stoppar han inte labbarna i*

*låt de ligga*

*låt uranet ligga*
*det finns andra sorters världar vi kan bygga*
*där barnen kan sova lugnt och vara trygga*
*prospektörerna måste klöva ner från sina kungasäten*
*vi är alla en del av denna planeten*
*någon kanske ville men inte tordes säga stopp*
*det har gått alldeles för långt nu är det dags att sätta stopp"*

# 4. Norrland in news media

In this chapter I put forward the news media as one important source of information that contributes to creating the geographical imagination of Norrland; the ways people come to understand the region and how they situate themselves in relation to it.

As already pointed out, representations of Norrland in the media, in research, in popular culture and by politicians have been criticized for being incomplete, focusing to a great extent on rural deprivation (Persson, 1990; Öhman, 2001; SOU, 2004). I suggest that both 'weak' and 'strong' regions are concurrently reproduced by the circulation of representations.

Through the use of critical discourse analysis of Swedish newspaper texts collected from the leading daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, I examine how the texts contribute to the geographical understanding of Norrland as a 'spatial other' within Sweden. Furthermore, I explore how the journalistic practices of news making play a part in the discursive construction of Sweden as an exalted modern nation, concurrently with Norrland being constructed as traditional and backward.

One way of theorizing and analyzing the tangled relationships of discursive constructions of Norrland in the news media is offered by critical discourse analysis. This form of analysis has its origin in critical linguistics – a section of discourse analysis that goes beyond the description of discourse to explanations of how and why certain discourses are produced.

Scholars such as Fairclough (1992; 1995), Halliday (1989), Wodak and Chilton (2005) and Van Dijk (1998; 2001) focus on language as a means of social construction. Their research aims at revealing the socio-political or socio-cultural ideologies that have become well established and accepted in discourse over time. The analysis is a way of revealing how power relations are constructed through and in discourse. Volosinov argues that, rather than reflecting reality, language should be seen as 'refracting' it through the lens of social struggle. For Bakhtin and Volosinov, this ideological aspect of language does not only apply within politics, education and or religion (Wetherell et al., 2001).

According to Fairclough (1992), discourse can be understood in three ways: as *text*, where the emphasis is on written and spoken text; as *practice*, where the focus is on processes through which text is produced, distributed, received, reworked and resisted; and finally as a *social* practice, where it is

examined as part of broader movements in society. These definitions do not suggest that such meanings of discourse as text, practice and social practice are easily distinguished. The different ways in which discourses works, and can be understood, are mutually enmeshed and are difficult to distinguish from each other in reality.

The analysis of intertextuality is a way of perceiving how texts are apt to be received, reworked and resisted. The presupposition of a text can be regarded as part of its intertextuality. We presuppose there to be other representations supporting the meaning of the text we are producing or consuming (Fairclough, 1995).

Although representations in the news media are important, they are not in any way self-sufficient for the mapping of the discourse on Norrland in which representations are (re)produced, received, reworked and resisted. Other media such as film and ICT as well as literature, art and politics are part of the everyday workings of discourse. News representations are only part of a wider discursive network constructing popular geographical imaginations of Norrland. Many scholars have stressed that national and regional identities are reproduced not only within politics, education and religion but also in the apparently trivial, casual conversations and actions of daily life (Billig, 1995). Political, scientific, literary and popular discourses are interwoven and apparent in news representations, contributing to the construction of Swedish national and regional identities.

The analysis seeks to understand why certain texts are produced and how institutional and professional logics contribute to the ways language is used in news, and how these texts may contribute to the construction of Norrland.

## 4.1 Analyzing news discourse on Norrland

Since it is necessary to restrict this analysis in time as well as space, it is limited to the years 2000-2004. This period captures a turbulent referendum regarding the EU monetary union, which confirmed a division within the nation into the EU-positive South and the EU-negative North (Statistics Sweden, 2005). Another relevant issue during the time period in question is the ongoing construction of a high-speed railway between Västernorrland and Västerbotten, *Botniabanan*. This project can be seen as part of Swedish regional politics and has received a great deal of criticism from other parts of the country.

Drawing on the analyses by Halliday (1989) and previous research concerning news representation by, for instance, Wodak (2005) and Van Dijk

(1988), the news representations are analyzed in terms of textual features. These features are part of the representations and highlight the journalistic practices used and the choices made when writing news articles. The starting point of the analysis is to identify textual features relevant to this study: (1) topics, (2) labeling and (3) analysis of processes and participants.

The news was selected from the database *Presstext*, which includes news articles from *Dagens Nyheter* (*DN*). The articles were found in two searches. First, 61 articles were found using *Jämtland, Gävleborg, Norrbotten, Västerbotten* and *Västernorrland* as *geographical* keywords. In a second search I used *Norrland* as the *geographical* keyword, which resulted in 38 articles (see Apendix). There are obvious difficulties with this selection. The search for articles on Norrland might have resulted in an overrepresentation of articles that underline distinctions. Moreover, not every article about Norrland is included; it is possible for a place to be discussed without being explicitly mentioned. For example, articles concerning the Sámi people or the mountain range are likely to be associated with Norrland. Words have metonymic functions – language has multiple meanings – and it is common for people to take one well understood or easily perceived aspect of something and use that aspect to represent either the thing as a whole or some other aspect or part of it. The analyzed articles are by no means a complete coverage of what has been written about Norrland between the years 2000 and 2004. Another limitation regarding the analysis concerns the use of the *Presstext* database. The database does not include information about the size of headlines, images or the location of the articles within the specific newspaper; for these reasons, these aspects have not been analyzed.

*DN*[36] was selected, as it is the largest Swedish daily newspaper and is regarded as one of two leading quality newspapers in Sweden. *DN* is a national paper but, at the same time, can be perceived as a Stockholmian paper; the editorial staff located in Stockholm inevitably presents viewpoints marked by this fact. The newspaper has a circulation of approximately 345,000 copies a day and three quarters of its readers live in the Stockholm area (Dagens Nyheter, 2007). Despite its relatively narrow range and target group, it can be argued that *DN* has a somewhat institutional position within Swedish society; it is a major national debate forum for powerful and influential actors. What is written in Dagens Nyheter is not only picked up by other media and spread to a large share of the Swedish population, it also reflects how regions – centers and peripheries – are talked about and looked upon by representatives of the political and economic elites. It (re)produces conditions for polit-

36 The official political position of *DN* is 'independently liberal'. *DN* is owned by *Bonniers*, one of the largest media companies in northern Europe.

ical and economical decisions. For this reason, the representations of Norrland in DN are particularly significant.

## 4.2 Norrland in the news: sparsely populated areas, subsidies and depopulation

What Fairclough calls *presupposition* relates to meanings in the text that are taken for granted – a collective imaginary that is reproduced and reconstructed and not critically revised. It is taken for granted by *DN* journalists that Norrland is the appropriate term to use for the geographical area in question. In the same way, Norrlandians and 'glesbygd' (Eng. sparsely populated areas) are presupposed. The counties of Norrland are frequently defined as sparsely populated without acknowledging the variations within counties and between areas. In the analyzed articles concerning Norrland, it is consequently presupposed that Norrland is a problematic region and that action must be taken to solve the problems. Furthermore, the idea of Norrland as a region of vast out-migration is also taken for granted, yet is rarely substantiated by specifying areas or referring to relevant research. Similarly, the surplus of men in the region is taken as fact.

As a consequence of limited space and time and the selectiveness in news making, some topics are widely discussed while others are ignored (Bourdieu 1996). Analyzing which topics are reported on offers a way of mapping the domain in which Norrland was represented and provides an indication of journalist practice regarding what is considered newsworthy. The topic should catch the interest of and motivate the reader to read the news and regard the event as newsworthy. The best-selling news is presented in the headlines and in the lead.

I examined different topics and domains in the news texts about Norrland (n=38). As articles were only published on a few topics, these consequently carry weight in the representation of Norrland. Five of these articles explicitly concerned migration or/and depopulation. All these articles also discussed regional subsidies to Norrland to varying degrees, which was the most common overall theme. A majority of the articles concerned migration, depopulation or/and regional subsidies and EU funding to Norrland. Thus, for *DN*, when Norrland is discussed, it seems to primarily be represented as a region dependent on subsidies. The frequent occurrence of these topics establishes them as legitimate domains for reporting about Norrland.[i]

Articles about legal action or legislation were written in ways that took for granted tensions between Norrland and the policy makers in Stockholm or Brussels. This order of discourse becomes a domain where Norrlandians (as

quoted in the articles) resist and rework what they experience as unfair news representations:

> "We in the North are disturbed by the debate regarding regions that draw on the reserves and regions that build up the reserves which has emerged due to the proposal for tax equalization between municipalities. It is not true that Stockholm contributes to the general welfare in Norrland." (*DN* February 16, 2004, letter to the editor from politicians in the counties of Norrland)

> "Now the Stockholmers will get tit for tat on the recent debate concerning regional subsidies." (*DN* November 21, 2003, letter to the editor)

When writing about *regional subsidies*, journalists primarily emphasized the great number of welfare recipients and the demand for more subsidies to Norrland. The (re)produced divide between Stockholm and Norrland and summational statements make it seem as if Norrland receives economic transfers and subsidies at the expense of Stockholm. One article goes as far as to describe regional subsidies as a result of the Norrlandians' preferred 'traditional lifestyle':

> "But they [the Norrlandians] aren't the only ones who pay. As many annoyed Stockholmers nowadays point out, they are also financing the Norrlandians' traditional lifestyle." (*DN* April 28, 2004, editorial)

Here, Norrland and Stockholm are constructed relationally. Norrland is constructed either as a weak, subordinate region with irresponsible and passive citizens or as a mistreated and exploited region. In this representational process, Stockholm becomes a metonym for modernity and executive power. These representations are reproduced by journalists and Stockholmers as well as by Norrlandians themselves; for Norrlandians, these might be expressions of resistance or means of achieving certain political goals.

The topic of *depopulation* stresses the great number of people leaving rural parts of Norrland. Two articles specifically concerned women who leave Norrland and, consequently, the surplus of men in the region. The journalists represent girls and women as more resourceful since they leave Norrland to study or find better jobs. The men are regarded as the problem; the macho culture within the working class makes them unwilling to work in other sectors than 'traditional' industry.

"The girls, on the other hand, have adopted middle-class ideals. They have expansive plans and are using their education to prepare themselves." (*DN* April 28, 2004, news article)

"The fact that a number of young men in Norrland cling to their homes might be worst for themselves … hard to find a woman and start a family." (*DN* April 28, 2004)

One of the articles reviews a report by the Swedish National Rural Development Agency, which reveals that a higher number of young men than young women leave Norrland.[37]

"The depopulation of sparsely populated areas continues. The out-migration of younger men is greatest, as shown in a report by the Swedish National Rural Development Agency, and this is a new trend." (*DN* August 26, 2004, news article)

The article further endeavors to explain why the men are leaving Norrland. The journalist assumes that the young men are unwilling to move, but are forced to do so because industrial companies are closing down. The men are thereby represented as working class and the women as those voluntarily moving away in order to study and become part of the middle class. Even though the reviewed report (Glesbygdsverket, 2004) makes it clear that a greater number of men than women are leaving Norrland, the journalist nevertheless upholds the presumption that women move to a greater extent than men.

"Even though the men are catching up with the women in terms of moving, the women are still the ones with a higher level of education [in sparsely populated areas]." (*DN* August 26, 2004, news article)

Despite the fact that the article concerns the out-migration of men, the journalist reproduces the popular representation (see e.g. Hansen 1998; Nordin 2007) about the serious overall shortage of women in some sparsely populated areas, namely Västerbotte, Norrbotten and Västernorrland:

"This is also where the shortage of female citizens is the greatest …" (*DN* August 26, 2004, news article)

[37] This is somewhat remarkable since young women in rural areas as well as in urban areas in Sweden move to a greater extent than men (see Lundholm, 2007).

O*ut-migration* is associated with unemployment and a lack of entrepreneurs. The journalists seem to look upon out-migration from Norrland, not for instance demographic factors or a lack of in-migrants, as the problem. The disparate representations of women and men in Norrland reveal a discourse on Norrland as a male-dominated society that is stagnant and underdeveloped. 'Traditional' becomes synonymous with 'working class', and equality becomes a measurement of urban modernity, middle class and progress, something Norrland is represented as lacking.

In Sweden, but also in other 'liberal Western democracies', the principal measurements for modernity (at least in rhetoric, not necessarily in practice) are openness and equality regardless of gender, race, class and sexuality (see e.g. Beck, 1992). Intolerance and obsolescence become metonyms for the traditional, and consequently, the rural (Little, 2002). Even though women in Norrland are described as actors, taking their destinies into their own hands, they are invisible as *voices* in this regional debate. With the representation of the women as moving from the men in Norrland to spaces of modernity and progress, they are concurrently represented as the symbolic and cultural capital of (modern and urban) men (Bourdieu, 2001); they become tools in the construction of urban modernity, or middle-class ideals.

> "An important condition [for prostitution] is also a traditional masculinity, that strictly decides what is manly and what is unmanly. In Norrbotten this division has become a concept." ' (*DN* 17 June 2003, editorial)

In the analysis of articles concerning specific counties, the media representations varied significantly between counties. When writing about Norrbotten, the most common topic was 'People in Norrbotten protest against reduced benefits and subsidies', followed by self-governance and *Kiruna Partiet*, a local party in Norrbotten. The most common topics in the news articles about Västerbotten were tourism and regional policies, but these topics did not dominate to any great extent. As for Jämtland, the topics focused on the deterioration of medical services and tourism. Three articles concerned attempts by county politicians to attract in-migrants to the region, preferably people from Stockholm. The one article about Västernorrland concerned the county's insufficient geriatric care. The majority of the news representations concerned Norrbotten and were, to a greater extent than for other counties, characterized by few topics and negative news.[ii]

Among the non-reported topics was the lack of in-migrants to Norrland; the decreasing population was instead explained in terms of out-migration. Moreover, background information on Norrland was rarely discussed. Given

that news discourse is an overriding site for the politics of Norrland, the topics reported in relation to Norrland contribute to a picture of the region as problematic, depending on subsidies and with high unemployment and out-migration. They disregard the fact that Norrland is a heterogenic region with great differences in employment rates and out-migration. Moreover, research shows that young women in most Western nations, including Sweden, are generally more mobile than young men (Statistics Sweden, 2006). Furthermore, the shortage of women and young people is evident in a few small municipalities not only in the North, but also in other parts of Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2006). An alternative way of presenting the situation in Norrland could have been, for instance, to depict Norrland as a diverse region with some municipalities that have been subjected to dramatic restructuring in the agriculture and industry sectors. Due to the large geographical area, sparsely populated areas and distance to the capital Stockholm, some municipalities in the region need extra support and resources. This is a discourse largely reproduced by Norrland debaters (Öhman, 2001).

The articles treat both particular and general phenomena of places in Norrland; thus, the focus on negative news is symptomatic. Particular traits of parts of the region become one with the entire region, and the general is to represent the particular. This might be partly explained by what is expected from journalists and their articles: The tendency to focus on few topics characterizes journalist practice and the competition between media tends to result in similar news reporting of the same events, rather than a variation in the reporting (Bell, 1991).

### 4.3 Labeling: simply Norrland

Labeling regions and places is not only a descriptive usage of linguistic resources but can be useful in understanding the social practices embedded in the communicative situation regarding, for instance, the social and political position of a region or place. The considered significance of a place or region may be revealed in the use of definitions and how thoroughly definitions are made.

In this analysis, I counted the times the term 'Norrland' was used and when Norrland was specified as, for instance, the county of Västerbotten. When the *headline* topics recognized a geographical area, this was only done by using the terms 'Norrland' or 'the North". In 17 of the 38 articles, Norrland was not specified anywhere in the text as counties, municipalities or cities. One of the articles specified the geographical area of the event by mentioning both the county and the municipality.[iii] When a place in Norrland, a county or municipality, was specified this was in most cases at the end of the text,

and a reference to Norrland was made at the same time. In this manner, places are positioned to a familiar but abstract space, with well known connotations and metonyms.

The counties of Västerbotten and Norrbotten were mentioned most frequently, while Gävleborg was only mentioned in two of the texts. As for mentioned cities or places within the different counties, Norrbotten was once more frequently represented.[iv] The province Hälsingland is included in the county of Gävleborg, and was referred to in one of the articles. Cities and places in Gävleborg were not mentioned at all, while the province of Dalsland (further south along the border to Norway), the county of Dalarna (immediately to the south of Norrland) and the ski resort Sälen in Dalarna were mentioned in two of the articles.

In representation statements, the particular often becomes universalized and the universal becomes particular (Said, 1978), and they include metonymical functions by which words have multiple functions and meanings. Specific aspects of Norrbotten, for instance, are altered to represent the whole region and general aspects of Norrland are constructed to also represent the specific, such as a village, town or county. Certain themes have become vital parts of the region and together create stereotypes. Consequently, the counties, municipalities and towns that most closely correspond to the stereotypes of Norrland are those representing the region.

Norrbotten and Västerbotten in the very north and specific places in Norrbotten appear in most cases to represent Norrland. Furthermore, the *DN* journalists rarely included the county of Gävleborg in the concept of Norrland, whereas Dalarna was included in articles about Norrland as often as Gävleborg was.

The county of Norrbotten was most frequently written about in terms of county-based articles, as well as in articles about Norrland, whereas Gävleborg seems almost invisible as a specific county in *DN*. The modest news reporting on Gävleborg and Västernorrland might indicate that few events or actions that journalists regard as newsworthy took place in these counties. Another explanation might be an inconsistency in the usage of geographical terms and a disparity in the construction of regional identities and regionalism within the counties.

The county of Norrbotten has been frequently mentioned in the media since the end of the 1990s, when the political party *Kiruna Partiet* was founded. This party is a regional party focusing on Norrbotten, but also on Norrland

as a whole. The party has had rather controversial ideas and has successfully made the headlines in *DN* and other media by using provocative rhetoric.

Jämtland has a tradition of regionalism and has developed a strong regional identity over time. The (mock) Republic of Jämtland was founded in 1960s as a symbolic reaction to governmental policies regarding out-migration from the region. The strong lobby in Jämtland against the European Union has also been well recognized by the media. Two articles written about Jämtland concerned regional identity, and were written in a satirical and ironic manner by *DN* journalists. One article makes fun of the Social Democratic local parliament and the skepticism toward the EU in Jämtland:

> ”Göran Persson [ Swedish Prime Minister at the time] has been sent by the EU to investigate what is happening in the increasingly secluded People’s Republic of Jämtland in the North of Sweden.” (*DN* February 2, 2002, editorial)

Hechter (1975) and Jansson (2003; 2005) have noted that people within a subordinate region can come to resist the identity that has been imposed on them, thus causing them to mobilize around autonomist or secessionist sentiments. *Kiruna Partiet* and the Republic of Jämtland can be seen as movements caused by a need to detach oneself from the nation and to be a regional voice in the national political debate.

Gävleborg, on the other hand, lacks a geographical identity to some extent. The area might more often be represented as part of a larger province, rather than as ‘Gävleborg’ or as part of Norrland. Even though Gävleborg has much in common with the other counties in Norrland, it remains invisible in the political discussion and in the geographical imagination of Norrland.[v]

The articles that were found using the five counties as keywords can be distinguished from those found in the first search. Those that explicitly dealt with counties in the texts were generally longer and more specific, though not necessarily more accurate. The counties were often referred to as ‘the counties in Norrland’, or ‘sparsely populated regions’. As already pointed out in previous chapter has Norrland been made synonymous with sparsely populated areas.

Norrbotten and Västerbotten are the counties that get to represent Norrland in *DN*, and it is also these counties that are characterized by the most negative news. Gävleborg and Västernorrland, however, are not necessarily Norrland in the eyes of the journalists. It also seems as if the old definition of

Norrland, as everything north of the Dalälven river, prevails in some journalists' representations of Norrland.

Norrland is repeatedly represented as an abstract rural area, even though it is a differentiated area with great differences between, for instance, the coast and inland areas. Thus, specific characteristics of Norrland are seen as applicable to the entire region, and any person living in Norrland becomes one with the entire population and its defining characteristics. Rather than focusing attention on underlying structural factors that contribute to some of the problems faced by the region, problems are often understood in terms of cultural and lifestyle differences between the North and the South of Sweden. In this way, Norrlandians can be held responsible for the persistence of several of the problems associated with the region, including unemployment and a diminishing population.

## 4.4 Processes and participants in *DN*

The focus in this part of the analysis is on the main characteristics of news articles about Norrland (n=38), and the comparison and identification of the representations of their actions and roles. Halliday (1989) offers several tools for the analysis of text. Drawing on Halliday's method of text analysis, I will examine the structure of the articles in terms of processes and participants. This approach distinguishes between different processes and participants that entail different grammatical relations. In short, this analysis aims at describing different participants in news discourse, and at construing how the dominant and subordinate agents are constructed, what they do, to whom and with what consequences.

In this analysis, I focus on material processes that involve participants' roles as actors (actor role) and affected participants (goal role). I will furthermore analyze the text in terms of relational and mental processes. Relational processes in articles about Norrland in *DN* concern descriptions and constructions of identity in relation to 'otherness'. The mental processes represent someone's thoughts, ideas or observations. In these processes, one participant is in a role of processing and another in a role of a participant that is being 'sensed'. It can sometimes be problematic to distinguish between different processes and participants, and the articles often include more than one process. My attempt here is to outline the general tendency in the representations of Norrland in *DN* articles and to draw attention to the grammatical choices made by the journalists.

When writing about Norrlandians, the *DN* journalists represented them as direct actors but, most frequently, as affected by actions taken by the Swe-

dish Government.[vi] Furthermore, the participants were represented differently in terms of personalization and impersonalization of agency. Norrlandians as actors were typically portrayed as personalized participants and were referred to in general terms as Norrlandians; sometimes the personalized participant was described as a united geographical area sharing a common goal:

> ”Norrland strikes back.” (*DN* 21 November, 2003, news article)

> ”The five counties in Norrland want to … “ (*DN* December 13, 2002, news article)

Other actors that appear in the articles were illustrated as impersonalized representatives, in most cases of the state of Sweden, different ministries or politicians and institutions in Brussels. Different representatives of the Swedish state were put into the role of actor on 22 occasions, as compared to goal roles on three occasions. The personalization of Norrlandians and the impersonalization of representatives of Swedish or EU establishments indicate an unequal and distanced relationship:

> "The government distorts information between us [businessmen in Norrland] and Brussels …” (*DN* February 11, 2001, news article)

Representing issues of Norrland and Norrlandians as something concerning personalized Norrlandians and the impersonalized Swedish establishment, *DN* journalists depicted issues concerning Norrland as matters in which Norrlandians and the Swedish establishment take opposing positions. It could be argued that the representation of Norrlandians, not only as a group but also as a *homogenized* group, indicates that Norrlandians are fighting against the system of the majority; consequently, Norrlandians become ‘othered’ and excluded from the majority system. The representation of Norrlandians is focused on their marginalized position and peripheral location, whereas the other actors are represented as the majority located in the center.

Not very surprisingly, Norrlandians were placed as actors in processes involving improving their rights and position. More interesting is that the Swedish establishment was frequently placed as an actor in processes constraining and conditioning Norrlandians’ actions, wishes and demands, practically positioning them as opponents to Norrland and the Norrlandians. The opposition between these roles is further established by the frequent placing of Norrlandians and Norrland in the affected participant role.

Other actors besides those from the Swedish establishment and Norrlandians were impersonalized participants, politicians in Norrland and local politicians in the Stockholm region. In the cases of Norrlandians, they were placed in an actor role and their actions almost always affected the non-Norrlandians in a negative way. The majority of the Swedish population and local politicians in Stockholm were positioned as antagonists against Norrland and Norrlandians in similar ways as the Swedish establishment was.

The use of relational processes in the news text focused on descriptions of Norrland and the Norrlandian participants. Norrlandians and Norrland were most often described in relation to metropolitan areas, first and foremost the area around Stockholm. Norrland was commonly portrayed as sparsely populated with long travel distances and as being in need of financial support. Norrlandians were represented as 'different', such as working class, poor and passive.

The most apparent example of the polarization of Norrland and Stockholm is the debate on regional distribution. The expression 'tärande och närande regioner' (see quotation below) has been used frequently by politicians and journalists and refers to two diametrically opposed categories of regions: one category that *only* builds on the state resources, and regions that *only* draw from the state resources. Naturally, in reality this is much more complicated. Norrlandians assert that the regional subsidy to Stockholm and other metropolitan areas, in total, goes far beyond the subsidies to Norrland. It also creates the large state investments that are mainly directed at the Stockholm area. Journalists at *DN* and representatives of the urban centers point out the comparatively large amount of subsidies to Norrland *per capita*. The representations of Norrland and Norrlandians are contradictory; how they were depicted depended, for instance, on the holders of the actor and goal roles – for instance, if a Norrlandian's voice was heard:

> "'Stockholm är en tärande region'. Nya beräkningar visar att stockholmarna får mest av statens kaka medan norrlänningarna missgynnas" (*DN* February 16, 2004, letter to editor)

Or, if a member of the Swedish majority system was heard:

> " Speaking for myself, I am happy to take my responsibility so that the whole nation will prosper. But certain parts of Norrland do not seem to be prospering; They seem to be dying." (*DN* April 28, 2004, editorial)

Different types of articles showed the power relations between Norrland and particularly Stockholm. Editorials and ordinary news material more commonly discussed Norrland in an imprecise and categorical way, while debate articles sometimes challenged views (re)produced in the news and editorials.

Diverse mental processes are used by the different actors. The *sayers* are those who initiate suggestions, make demands and decide, while the *sensers* are those who believe and think. Not very unexpectedly, the state officials were those who often made 'decisions' and 'suggestions', while the personalized and impersonalized Norrlandians more often 'demanded', 'wanted' and 'thought'. The media articles reveal a difference in the mental processes between the articles' participants. The impersonalized Swedish establishment and state officials were represented as sensers of mental processes and the Norrlandians as those repeatedly being sensed. Norrlandians were represented as sensers in articles concerning demands from politicians or organizations in Norrland for more government support and various subsidies:

> "The Norrland Association[38] demands that the Swedish Government take responsibility so that adequate public transportation systems can be maintained in Norrland." (*DN* May 30, 2002, news article)

This analysis shows a variety of patterns in the distribution of agency as well as affecting and affected participant roles in *DN*. The general trend, however, positioned Norrlandians as direct agents in the process of improving their situation. Furthermore, Norrlandians were consistently represented as a deviant and homogenized group. The Swedish establishment was primarily represented as participants restricting Norrlandians' wishes and demands.

## 4.5 Meanings of news representations

This analysis asserts that representations mean something; It is of importance how places and people are talked about, portrayed and written about. Everyone attempting to improve the conditions of a marginalized population is exposed to representations that become the preconditions for action, regardless of whether these representations are 'true'. Well known and frequently repeated themes dominate the discursive field and reject all explanations that differ from the norm. Stereotypical descriptions affect the reader as he/she is repeatedly exposed to the same story. An acknowledged metaphor on the subject is thereby created and people, places and spaces are described with attributes derived from already given categories. Certain

[38] Norrlandsförbundet is a lobby organization, with approximately 6 000 members, that operates in issues related to the northern part of Sweden

words have become vital parts of the categories and together reproduce the stereotypes.

Regardless of whether it was done through the use of actors, topics or labeling, the news discourse in *DN* represented Norrland and Stockholm as opposites, whereby one is defined by what the other is not. The representations in *DN* reproduce discourses of difference, contributing to the establishment and a reproduction of the uneven power relations between the North and the South. In addition, the differences are made to seem 'natural' through journalistic practices and textual choices. Even though official reports and research offer more complex and differentiated representations of places in Norrland, journalists tend to ignore these reports and repeat the already adopted simplifications and generalizations. The practice of news making often entails centering on change and negativity, which might explain why the more 'problematic' of the counties are more frequently represented than the other counties.

The news coverage in *DN* offers a discourse on Norrland as a region heavily dependent on various kinds of financial support. The relative absence of defining places in Norrland makes it difficult for the reader to view the area as anything other than a standardized region dependent on subsidies. Particular issues for Norrland, such as unemployment and out-migration, become synonymous with the entire region regardless of actual local variations, discussed above in terms of 'metonymical magic' and summational statements. In this process, the media contributes to the shaping of the public opinion of Norrland as a 'weak' region. These representations reenact the role of the center as being in control of the distribution of resources.

Representations of depopulation are important features in the discourse on Norrland: Norrland as an unattractive space from which people move. The idea that people flee the region in favor of an urban lifestyle, and representations of Stockholm as the place of power and action, further reproduce the discourse on the modern and progressive city and the traditional and stagnant rural space. The media representations of Norrland as a region with a significant male surplus might be the result of the discourse on the rural as societies with traditional values. These traditional values become metonyms for working class, machismo and oppressive gender roles, in contrast to the discourse on the urban as a progressive space populated by men with exalted modern ideals. Women here become tools and measurements of men's modernity and progress. Women are depicted as moving from spaces of 'working-class ideals' to those of modern progressive men. Those staying in Norrland are, as a result, represented as being one with the region and as those to blame for the problems there.

Postcolonial research suggests that all identities are constructed through representations of the 'other', and that these representations are always made in a state of power imbalance. I argue that northern Sweden and its population are represented as a category in which we can recognize processes of otherness similar to the constructions of the 'other' first described by Said (1978) in the case of the Occident and the Orient; thus this Orientalism is internal, dramatizing distance and difference within the nation. The internal Orientalist discourse represents a subordinate section of the state in a particular way so as to produce a national identity with desirable characteristics. In the representations, asymmetrical power relations and hierarchies of places and people are reinforced and made to seem natural.

A condition for the continuation of a center is the existence of a periphery. Even though representations of the areas of Norrland may be produced with the best intent, those in *DN* produce both a center and a periphery that reenact and reproduce geographies of difference. Moreover, as we have seen, the representations of peripheral Norrland as presented in the texts are used by Norrlandians themselves as a strategy for resisting the elite's execution of power but also to obtain more of the state's resources, which further reproduces marginalization. None of these practices will attract in-migrants or investments to the region. One way of representing Norrland in a more balanced manner would be to acknowledge alternative discourses and the variations among the different counties, municipalities and cities, since summational statements hide the politics of representation, in research, popular culture, politics and the news – in Sweden and elsewhere.

Next chapter aims to show how these representations get a life of their own, how they are part of a wider discursive network, how they are self-reinforced. But also how they are acted upon, and thus, yield material consequences.

# 5. Norrland in film

Building on the previous chapter, this chapter engages more thoroughly with the intertextual representations of 'Norrland'. The chapter shows the mix of 'facts' and 'fictions' regarding how references of fictionalized stereotypes are used in different contexts, extending popular culture. In an effort to produce popular representations of Norrland, directors and writers adopt well known Hollywood stereotypes of white working-class men (as lazy, sexist, racist, homophobic, stupid and dangerous). These stereotypes correspond to 'glocalized' representations of an obsolete and 'unproductive' rural population in contrast to exalted neoliberal ideals of a modern productive population in urban areas.

Film studies commonly focus on the mimetic aspects of film, that is, its ability to create images of the world, since films do not produce reality but images. From the works of, e.g., Barthes (1982) and Baudrillard (1987), the importance of images in understanding the everyday cultural landscape is an established notion today.

Film is seen here as a representative practice that can play a significant role in shaping national and regional identities, since identity formation is a representational process. Thereby, film has an ideological function and can be responsible for reproducing and preserving existing values in society. From this perspective, film is not simply for amusement or a time-killing exercise, but ought to be open to critical inspection when inequalities and injustice such as racism, sexism and socio-economic inequalities are concealed or ignored (hooks, 1996; Hatty, 2000).

Similar to conventional film analysis, geographers have explored the construction and narrative of film and the on-screen portrayal of spaces, places, people, power relations and so on, but primarily as a means of understanding the social, political spatial implications of film (Hopkins, 1994).

Geographers such as Fish (2007), Bell (2007), Aitken (1994), Jansson (2005) and Jarosz and Lawson (2002) highlight the importance of cinematic representation for understanding our place in the world. In *Cinematic Countrysides* edited by Fish (2007), the authors explore the mutual relationship between film and the rural. Of particular interest to the authors is in the relational spaces of film, here most notable as the country/city opposition. Bell (2007) discusses the ways of 'writing' and 'reading' the rural as a cultural 'text' through the plots and characters of horror movies. Here, the rural works as horrific and strange backdrops and the country folk as monsters, in

contrast to a safe and familiar city and ordinary city folks. The film analyses by Jansson (2005) and Jarosz and Lawson (2002) relate to the way urban middle-class whites reproduce an essentialized 'redneck discourse' so as to re-imagining class as a matter of lifestyle choice.

Adding to this body of research on popular culture and the construction of national and regional identities, race and class, this chapter explores how, and with what consequences, local narratives of rural others in a film are reproduced and applied to a different geographical, political, social and economic context.

To show how representations of northern Sweden appearing in a renowned motion picture are concurrently reproduced, reworked and resisted, I use extracts from influential national and local newspapers that become part of the everyday life of citizens in Sweden and citizens in what is commonly called the North of Sweden, or Norrland. The articles were found in the databases *Presstext* and *Mediearkivet* [accessed on January 4 2008], which hold articles from the largest newspapers in Sweden, both national and local ones. This analysis does not account for all articles written about the film; The quotes from news articles are merely a way to show media representations critical of the one-sided representation of Norrland, and representations that use the film to confirm a clichéd discourse on Norrland.

In this following analysis, I want to make three key points about the film and its effects. First, I illustrate how these representations are produced using geographical generalizations that in the manner of internal orientalism obscure geographical diversity and differences within groups of 'others'. I offer some examples of how dualities, such as the masculine/feminine and the modern/traditional, are used in the film. Here, Stockholm comes to symbolize everything Norrland is not, and representations of Norrland become reliant on contrasting representations of a modern, progressive, equal and just urban middle class. Second, I show how the film adapts to successful Hollywood narratives with the result of reproducing popular imaginations of the globalized xenophobic Hollywood 'redneck' or 'hillbilly'. Finally, I show the blending of 'facts' and 'fiction', how the film makes its way into political and news media discourses of Norrland. I want to exemplify how this blending of facts and fiction becomes part of a neoliberal agenda. To begin with, I give a brief summary of the film: where it takes place, its plot and its important characters.

## 5.1 The film: The Hunters

*The Hunters* is a Swedish thriller from 1996 by director Kjell Sundvall. It was a great success as it was seen by close to 800,000 viewers (Lumiere database, 2008) and was praised by critics. The film was partly sponsored by structural funds from the European Union Objective 1, which is intended to assist regions with a very low population density[39]. The film was set in the countryside in the village of Älvsbyn in Norrbotten county in the region of Norrland, and became the second most popular feature film in Sweden that year. *The Hunters* has become somewhat of a modern Swedish film classic, mainly because of its outstanding viewing figures. It has been broadcast for Swedish Television ten times and hundreds of thousands of people have bought or rented the film and at least as many have seen the trailer. A documentary about the making of the film was released in 1996, and a book has been written about it (Amcoff et al., 1996). It is safe to say that a large portion of the Swedish population of around nine million has seen and discussed the film.

*The Hunters* is the story of Erik, a policeman from Stockholm, who moves back to his home village in northern Sweden. He moves in with his brother Leif in their old family home. Erik starts working on a long-running case in which reindeer have been poached, and discovers that much more is happening in the small community than what appears on the surface.

The opening scenes of *The Hunters* show peacefully grazing reindeer and a majestic mountain landscape. Suddenly, we hear gunshots and the reindeer run off in panic, and the next scene takes us to an authentic slaughter of reindeer. Finally, the last introductory scene depicts a car on its way into the wilderness on a road that ends somewhere beyond the horizon. The driver is Erik.

Erik is back in his home village to attend his father's funeral. His brother, Leif, one of the choir singers at the funeral ceremony, is all smiles when Erik enters the church a little late. Back at the family home, there is a wild party to celebrate the memory of their father. American trucks, home-distilled liquor and hunting stories dominate the scenes. Erik is greeted with hugs and kisses from his old friends (the hunters). He decides to stay in his home village and work as a local police officer. The local chief of police is pleased, and notes that "it's hard to employ someone from out of town".

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39 North-Central Sweden, Central Norrland and Upper Norrland in Sweden are regarded as areas eligible under objective 1.

One day Erik and his brother go fishing in the mountains, and Erik brings up their childhood and abusive father. Leif simply takes a swig of coffee and liquor and says: “a little beating never hurt anyone” (own transl.). Leif starts to sing (somewhat exhilarated by the liquor). He could have had a career as an opera singer in Stockholm. Erik points this out to Leif, who answers that “someone had to take care of the family property” and implies that opera and Stockholm are only for “fags”. Similarly, in another scene he remarks that the color Erik has chosen for the kitchen in their home is “a little bit gay”.

The friendly relations among Erik, his brother Leif, his old friends (the hunters) and the rest of the community stop abruptly when Erik tries to solve the case of reindeer being poached. The local chief of police (one of the hunters’ father-in-law) is indifferent to the case and blames the Sámi for slaughtering their own animals, but Erik suspects the hunters, particularly after learning that they all are sick-listed or unemployed and still drive expensive 4WDs.

Not only the hunters but the whole community cover up for each other, and are uncooperative and unappreciative of Erik’s interference. Erik suggests that Norrland is unique and different when it comes to people’s attitudes.

On one occasion, Leif wants to meet the hunters and Erik at the local bar. He suggests that they “go and look at the Philippine woman”. The owner of the bar tells Erik he bought the woman (Nena) for a paraffin lamp. The hunters spend many evenings at the local bar harassing Nena, making crude sexist and racist remarks. Leif’s friends openly treat her violently and disparagingly, and call her a “Philippine hooker”. To the annoyance of the hunters Erik defends Nena and, subsequently, initiates a relationship with her.

Anna, a beautiful female attorney, arrives from Stockholm to assist in the investigation. She is formal and strict, and personifies modernity with her attributes and appearance. During her inquiries one of the hunters approaches her, saying “here you can find some real men and be fucked properly”. Anna replies quickly and with contempt: “I doubt you’re good enough to fuck properly. I doubt you have enough imagination, or that you can even spell that word.”

As the story continues the hunters become increasingly brutal, killing two witnesses, and are about to kill a mentally retarded man. The story goes on and the hunters, facing the risk of being exposed by Erik, rape Nena in revenge. Leif becomes increasingly repulsive as he appears constantly drunk, kills his puppy, lies to women in contact ads and embezzles his and Erik’s inheritance. The story ends violently in an explosion, with Leif blowing himself up together with the family home.

## 5.2 Blurred Scenography

Needless to say, there exist several different representations of what Bordwell (1991) calls the 'scenography' (film space) of Norrland and, consequently, the meaning of Norrland changes depending on focus and context. At the same time as the region is perceived as distinctively different, it is also regarded as one of the most symbolic 'Swedish' regions. The scenery of Norrland, the landscape and the indigenous Sámi people are often objects and practices that are used to represent traditional Sweden in different national and international contexts. The truly 'old' traditions idealize an abstract rural society prior to urbanization and are those that show up in travel guides, tourism leaflets and local district associations (Gaunt and Löfgren, 1984).

Despite these differences within Norrland, the region is often regarded as a homogenous region suffering from problems of population decrease, lack of female citizens and unemployment. This has caused frustration among many of those living in Norrland as it generalizes across a large geographical area without taking into consideration the nuances and differences within the region (Öhman, 2001).

> "Many of my friends and I have time and again been surprised when meeting people who, in fact, believe that things are authentic in "The Hunters" (...). In addition, it is also annoying that everyone living in the two-thirds of Sweden that are called Norrland is bundled up in one and same category." (*Västerbottens-Kuriren* 7 February 1998, commentary in a local Västerbotten newspaper, own transl.)

Said (1978:255) calls this a "summational statement": Generalizations are made across wide geographical areas and the entire population is regarded as homogeneous in all important respects.

The rural landscape in *The Hunters* is typically used as an exotic backdrop, which indicates that this great deserted landscape may hide unresolved crimes and murders. But the rural is not only a backdrop in this film; It is also a crucial element of the story. Here, the rural could not be just any rurality; The specific yet abstract summational statement of Norrland is packed with taken-for-granted meanings and ideas about local attitudes and lifestyles. These are reproduced by the director to construct a knowledgeable story since "cinematic image-events are bound by the authenticity of place" (Aitken and Zonn, 1994:17).

The audience is never explicitly informed of where the film takes place. Thus, people with Norrland accents, the reindeer, the woods and the mountains

appearing throughout the film explain in simple terms that *The Hunters* takes place in the North of Sweden. On one occasion the location narrowed is down to a 'small Norrbottnic community' Despite this, in articles and reviews about the film it comes to signify Norrland or 'up there', a geographical generalization, a manipulation of spatiality that puts an end to representations of a differentiated geographic space.

These distinctions allow the observer to enumerate the systematic differences between 'up there' and other places and regions, a formulation that constitutes the foundation for the discourse on internal orientalism. These representations obscure real diversity within groups of people and spaces (Jansson, 2005). In this process, the people 'up there' are represented as the others, and characters who dissociate themselves from the others are those we are destined to identify with.

The duality between the rural and the urban is mainly represented as the duality between an abstract rural space in the North and the capital, Stockholm. Fish (2007) points out that the rural and the city are commonly "relational spaces of film" (Fish, 2007, p 5), whereby rural space is represented as a space of traditional and often reactionary values. One apparent example of this relational process is when the hunters in the film are talking about metropolitan Stockholm as "Fjollträsk", as if to say that Stockholm is nothing for real men (*Fjoll* from *fjollig* = effeminate, about 'feminine' homosexual men, *träsk* = swamp, a common word used as part of place names in Västerbotten and Norrbotten). Since the film's premiere, this appellation of Stockholm has frequently been used in different contexts – in plays and movies and by journalists. 'Fjollträsk' is now regarded as an amusing name for Stockholm and is often used by Stockholmers themselves. 'Fjollträsk' has repeatedly been used and circulated in the stereotyping of 'Norrlandians', and has become part of the discourse on Norrland as homophobic but also as reactionary in general.[40] Thereby, the word is as much an appellation to Norrlandians as to Stockholmers. For instance, a columnist in a Stockholm-based tabloid writes about the Eurovision song contest and the trendy gay community in Stockholm:

> "A real Fjollträsk [Stockholm], but we should be happy about that" (*Aftonbladet* 11 February 2005, own transl.).

Scholars such as Bell (2007), Bell and Valentine (1995) and Little (2002) have explored the relationships between rurality and masculinity. Bell (2007) puts forward the notion of the feminizing city and the masculinizing

[40] Google match for 'fjollträsk'= 35 300 (1 Feb, 2007).

rural as based on the discourse on the 'crisis in masculinity' whereby urban, white, middle-class Western men are considered to have undergone a series of emasculations as a result of transformations to their social and economic roles (Connell, 1995). Bell (2007) shows how a comedy (*City Slickers*) and a horror movie (*Hunter's Blood*) depict this crisis in masculinity: Urban men are first feminized by encountering the rural but are then masculinized when they finally conquer it (the other). In these two movies, as well as in *The Hunters*, the ideal masculinity seems to be held by urban middle-class men (often masculinized after years in the feminine city). When re-constructing masculinity, the other (here the male rural working class) is portrayed as holding the old, oppressive masculinity that no modern man wants to be associated with.

Film scenes in *The Hunters* endorse the representation of 'up there' as a space of 'traditional' male-dominance; The hunters spend their time looking at pornography, making sexist remarks while drinking their beer. The female characters are few and play minor parts in the film, doing household chores or serving as objects for the male gaze. The females visible are represented as subjugated, bitter and burdened – with unfashionable attire and hairstyles. The exception to this is Anna, the female attorney from Stockholm. She personifies modernity and scholarliness in her appearance and attributes. When she humiliates the hunters by symbolically dismissing their sexual abilities, the women in the film get to confirm masculine modernity by dismissing masculine traditionalism. As illustrated in the previous chapter, women again become the symbolic and cultural capital of (modern and urban) men (Bourdieu, 2001).

Besides the men in the film being represented as sexist and homophobic, an openly racist attitude completes the xenophobic triangle. The most apparent expression of racism (and sexism) involves their treatment of Nena[41], the Philippine woman who works at the local bar and becomes Erik's lover. Nena becomes a reference to the discourse on 'female flight from Norrland' (see Nordin,2009). She becomes the ultimate symbol of a hopeless traditional masculinity; the character of Nena reproduces a discourse on 'the female east Asian prostitute' who must accept the men who are discarded by modern Swedish women (for an analysis of east Asians in Western popular culture, see Hübinette, 2007). In these kinds of film narratives, women are rarely represented as *self*, but rather as *other*, the lover of the hero or as a carrier of the moral the hero is trying to escape (Aitken and Zonn, 1994).

[41] The actress playing Nena was later interviewed by journalists under the headline: *Männen tror det är fritt fram* (Eng. Men take liberties). *Aftonbladet* 17 Feb, 1996.

Similarly, the indigenous Sámi people are victims of the prejudice of the Norrlandians. As outlined in Chapter 3, at the end of 1600s parts of Norrland became a Swedish colony and the Sámi people and the Finnish-speaking Swedes near the Finnish border were considered and treated as inferior to the 'Swedish race' (Lundmark, 2002). The film is based on this historical and ongoing conflict between settlers and indigenous people. Even though this relationship is a crucial part of the film, the Sámi people, their thoughts and actions are not. Pred (2000) shows the double role of Swedish racism, how it obscures class divisions by positioning acts of racism to certain places and people. Thus, acts of racism toward the Sámi people are represented as existing in primarily Norrland and among the 'ethnic Swedes' in Norrland. These representations have long overshadowed the more serious discrimination of the indigenous population committed by the Swedish state (Lundmark, 1998; 2002).

As noted by Jansson (2005), the construction of the spatial 'internal other' successfully simplifies power relations and reproduces dualisms, here between city folk and country folk. The essentialized representations of the Norrlandian position a white working class in space, as well as traditional values such as racism and sexism.

## 5.3 Hollywood narratives

Traditionally, Swedish films have a reputation as frozen, taciturn and deeply serious. Seen in the works of Sjöström, Stiller and Bergman[42], natural scenery, the hazards of human relationships and death have been among the dominant Swedish film themes. These film strategies and themes have been used as often in popular successes as in major prestige projects and acclaimed artistic works (Furhammar, 2003).

The essentialized Norrland has now been presented to the Swedish public for many years, in literature, films, plays and the mass media. The early popular representations were produced by proletarian writings describing honest hard-working people living close to nature (Öhman, 2001; Lindgren, 1965). These writings were later accompanied by social realism in films also portraying the everyday life of rural people, focusing on Norrland as marginalized and mistreated but on the people of Norrland as resourceful (see films by such directors as Lars Molin, Jan Troell and Lars Westman). These kinds of representations of Norrland were common in the 1960s and 1970s, and were often accompanied by a critical class perspective (Cowie, 1985; Timm, 2003) (See also Chapter 3).

[42] Victor Sjöström 1879-1960, Mauritz Stiller 1883-1928, Ingmar Bergman 1918-2007.

With *The Hunters*, Swedish film approached the American action genre. The film has been described as a "Western prototype" (*Aftonbladet* 2 February 1996; see also Furhammar, 2003) and in more degrading terms as a "simple copy of an American film" (Interview with Ingmar Bergman by Swedish Television, quoted in *Aftonbladet* 9 February 1997). The film evidently appealed to Hollywood, as they wanted to remake the film with cowboys shooting wild horses for fun (*Aftonbladet* 30 March, 2003).

Film scholars such as Nestingen and Elkington (2005) show how the capitalist-consumerist agenda of media production and Hollywood's dominance on cinema screens around Europe influence Swedish filmmaking, for instance through the audience expectations that are largely shaped by Hollywood productions, and through the increasingly frequent attempts of the Nordic countries to imitate well known Hollywood genres. The practice of filmmaking has become increasingly complex; it is a high-risk project and filmmakers do everything they can to decrease the financial risk by way of adaptation and imitation of previously successful films and by reproducing rather than challenging stereotypes. This is evident in the Hollywood film industry (see e.g. Baker and Faulkner, 1991). Films like *The Hunters* that aspire to resemble American film might imply a use of filmmaking practice that shares some of the problems of adaptation, imitation and stereotyping.

> "I wanted to make a hell of an exciting and scary film that could compete with American film" (*Aftonbladet* 7 February 1996, interview with director Kjell Sundvall, own transl.).

*The Hunters* has inspired several Swedish TV series and plays, but has also been compared to earlier film productions such as the American film *Deliverance* (1972), in which businessmen from the city barely survive the assaults of the local population in rural Georgia. Other comparisons have been made to the American film *Mississippi Burning* (1988), about racism in the American South (e.g. *Aftonbladet* 2 February, 1996; 7 March, 1996). Similar to *The Hunters*, both these films have been criticized for reproducing negative accounts of already marginalized and stereotyped (rural) regions and groups of people, primarily the white working class (Jarosz and Lawson, 2001; Jansson, 2004; Bell, 2007; Fish, 2007).

> "The story does not feel unique. If anything, it seems borrowed from some ordinary American film taking place in the American South." (*Västerbottens-Kuriren* 7 February 1998, review of *The Hunters*, own transl.)

The attempt by the filmmaker to produce an internationally marketable film

results in internationally marketable stereotypes. The stereotyping of the white working class in *The Hunters* draws on the familiar popular image of the (Hollywood) 'hillbilly' or 'redneck' in movies such as *Thelma and Louise*, *Deliverance, Hunter's Blood* and *City Slickers,* and TV shows like *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Critical research on popular culture and its effects shows how TV shows and films may help ease public concerns about economic and social inequalities by minimizing the distress of the people represented as hillbillies by portraying their poverty as simply part of their folk culture (Jarosz and Lawson, 2001; Jansson, 2004; Bell, 2007; Williamson, 1995). Comparisons can be made with Sweden as regards the mechanisms of blaming the poor for being poor. As compared to the US, Sweden has a generous welfare system but, as already pointed out, some parts of Norrland suffer from unemployment and an ageing population due to a restructuring of industry and out-migration. Instead of talking about these economic and social inequalities, Swedish media talk about a 'welfare lifestyle' in Norrland, and research describes the population in Norrland as lacking in moral standards. Welfare recipients are blamed for being recipients (Social Insurance Report 2009:2). These stereotypes consist of the intersection of geography, ethnicity, gender and class, as the Norrlandians as a category is intersected with the white (mostly male) working class (Little, 2002).

Different from American film taking place in the rural, where the plot is made up of the clash between country and city folk (such as *Deliverance*, *Hunter's Blood*, *City Slickers*, *Mississippi Burning*), Swedish films typically portray the homecoming brother, daughter or friend.[43] Here, the focus is on the transformation from traditional to urban and modern. The portrayal of countryside folk (those who stay in the home village) as losers and city folk (the people who moved away) as modern and progressive may well correspond to ideals of modernity and neoliberal ideas of growth and flexibility (Harvey, 2005).

## 5.4 Fictionalized Facts and Factualized Fiction

Most researchers agree with the idea of intertextuality: Writers never write in a vacuum but are always influenced by what they have read, heard or seen before (Aitken and Zonn, 1994). Yet there are objections to this perspective when it comes to literature and film. Walter Benjamin describes this as a fatal error, to overestimate the creative in the name of the 'principal of creativity'. Since its release, *The Hunters* has been subject to discussion and has been referred to in contexts extending beyond the popular discourse, making

[43] This difference between Swedish and American film may very well be explained by the late urbanization in Sweden.

its way into political and media discourses. For example, a police officer from the South of Sweden comments on the problem of poaching in Norrbotten:

> "I am from the South of Sweden and down there people think about *The Hunters* as somewhat of a documentary. And I am sorry to say, my experiences so far have not shown anything else…" (*Norrbottens-Kuriren* 25 October, 2003, news article, own transl.)

The blend of fact and fiction is apparent in the film, but also in the critique and discussion that followed. On some occasions, the film is considered to be fiction and separated from the 'real' world. On other occasions, it is presupposed that the film is based on authenticity and real events. The ideological function of representations constructs assigned roles, and through unvarying repetition stereotypes are reproduced, reworked and resisted. The stereotyping is decontextualized in different settings and times, but the reproduction of stereotypes is a condition for the order of power in the world and has real material consequences, and if repeated stereotypes legitimate dominance (Van Dijk, 2001).

The reproduction of stereotypes can be illustrated here by a chronicle celebrating a television debate on the exploitation of the welfare system:

> "Such an undisguised portrait of the real Sweden has not been shown since Kjell Sundvall revealed the banal evil of the countryside in the movie The Hunters" (*Aftonbladet* 20 August 2004, own transl.).

Similarly as Norrrlandians in the news (see Chapter 4) are the Norrlandians in the film represented as either unemployed or tax dodgers – not because they have to but because they choose to; Tax evasion is represented as being nothing out of the ordinary. The idea of a 'welfare lifestyle'[44] in Norrland has been one of the most commonly used themes by politicians, journalists and scholars when addressing Norrland (as shown in Chapter 4). This may be seen as a neoliberal response to the Social Democratic regional distribution policy initiated in the mid 1900s in order to ease the consequences of regional economic restructuring and calm the angry protests of out-migration regions (SOU, 2000). In the middle of the 1980s, government officials and a network of rural organizations came together with the slogan "The whole of Sweden should live"[45].

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[44] A systematic misuse of welfare subsidies.

[45] 'The whole of Sweden should live became a national movement and a strong lobby organization. The movement is still very much alive but is less influential. (Hela Sverige Ska Leva, 2008.)

As briefly outlined in Chapter 3, a vital precondition for maintaining nationwide support for the Social Democratic policy was to justify the policy of regional restructuring. The representation of Norrland as a weak and, above all, disadvantaged region was essential for justifying regional restructuring *and* regional support for both the government *and* the receiving municipalities. Similarly, the reproduction of the discourse on Norrland as weak and incapable was crucial for those who opposed governmental interference and who argued for neoliberal solutions to the restructuring of the economy of Norrland.[46]

When the Swedish economy was hit by a crisis at the beginning of the 1990s, the neoliberal arguments for increasing flexibility on the labor market and the need to restructure the peripheral economy became increasingly influential in the public debate (VINNOVA, 2007, see also Schough, 2008). As already pointed out, one major idea in the regional policy investigation in 2000 was that the policy should support regional diversity, help strengthen regional comparative advantages and, finally, that all parts of the country should contribute to the growth; In other words, a change in regional policy discourse and strategy from "all of Sweden should live" to "all of Sweden should provide growth" (ITPS, 2005). It was now the responsibility of provinces and their populations to create growth and welfare. Compensation for disadvantaged demographic or geographic structures, as well as for economic restructuring in the global economy, was no longer considered a major task for regional policy.

Thus, the essentialized representation of Norrland as a backward region and the Norrlandians as lazy, traditional and largely responsible for their weaker social, economic and political position, was a crucial piece in the argumentation for a political shift and a new regional policy.

Several recent and celebrated films have portrayed not only Norrland and the Norrlandians, but also other rural places in Sweden such as parts of Dalarna and Värmland: *Dalecarlians* (Masjävlar) (2004), *Like in Heaven* (Så som i himmelen) (2004), *Popular Music from Vittula* (Populärmusik från Vittula) (2004) and *The Wedding Photographer* (Bröllopsfotografen) (2009). All these films are congruent with the contemporary literary cliché of

[46] Sweden's regional policy included economic subsidizes to stimulate the localization or maintenance of production in regions that experience high unemployment and the closure of key industries. However, the regional policy changed from aid programs to public investments during the 1970s and 1980s. Infrastructure investments as well as the geographical dispersion of the growing public sector became the major strategy to hamper regional polarization in Sweden and, to a certain extent, this turned out to be a successful approach. The growing public sector provided new employment wherever people lived and the out-migration that was dramatic in the 1960s slowed down in the 1970s and remained low also in the 1980s (Vinnova, 2007).

the rural, and the neoliberal discourse that "the whole of Sweden should provide growth".

Two months after the premiere of *The Hunters*, a Swedish TV show debated the problem of people exploiting the welfare system. As a director portraying tax evaders, Kjell Sundvall was one of the participants. He was presented as a public debater (*Helsingborgs Dagblad* 18 April 1996). Another example makes visible the reproduction of fictionalized facts and factualized fiction: Journalists claimed that *The Hunters* was based on a true story, and a news item claimed that it was in Kalix (another small village in Norrbotten) that the director had found inspiration for the plot of the film:

> "A story ABOUT THE MUDDLE IN KALIX – THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SUCCESSFUL FILM ...The Hunters – an uncanny Swedish film about poaching, threats and a Norrland parish in fear." (*Aftonbladet* 7 April 1996, own transl.)

The articles were published while the film was still being shown in cinemas, and Sundvall neither openly denied nor agreed with the journalist's speculations. By way of journalistic practice and intertextuality, journalists linked the story of *The Hunters* to trafficking and misuse of the welfare system.

> "The film (*The Hunters*) by Kjell Sundvall is based on a true story...You get the same feeling when you read about prostitution in Norrland." (*Aftonbladet* 27 July 2003, article on the trafficking of Russian women, own transl.)

> "Watch the movie *The Hunters*; They are not like regular Swedes up there." (*Aftonbladet* 14 March 2004, chronicle reflecting on a specific use of health insurance in Norrbotten, own transl.).

Most film critics agree that *The Hunters* relies on already constructed clichés, stereotypes and categories in order to create a knowledgeable story. This reproduction of stereotypes received some criticism from Norrlandians who viewed themselves as urban and modern, and from those who held the film as a representation with the potential of shaping regional identities, such as the following journalist from Norrbotten writing for a Stockholm-based tabloid:

> "What an appalling sketch he has painted of Norrbotten...Here is the parade of clichés:...In moonshine,...In homophobia,...In tax evasion,...In corrupt legal practice,...In contempt for women...Here is the Norrbottnic man made into a national lout." (*Aftonbladet* 6 February

1996, own transl.)

At the same time, the film was praised by those who regarded it as authentic and credible:

> "A horridly realistic police film." (*Helsingborgs Dagblad* 13 July 1996, review in a local newspaper in the far South of Sweden, own transl.)

Sundvall responded to criticism by stressing the fact that he himself was born in Norrbotten. He referred to his personal experience of Norrbotten and asserted the authenticity of the film and his right as a self-identified Norrlandian to portray the people of Norrbotten. Hence, Barthes (1982) puts forward the film as a medium that empowers the filmmaker and disempowers the audience.

> "But that's the way it is! I have authentic models for most things in the film. And I have been at parties and when you pass by the next day there are a couple of reindeer hanging in the cowshed…It's partly like that in Norrbotten…If some Stockholmer had made this movie on speculation it could have resulted in a parody, but I know the tone." (*Aftonbladet* 7 February 1996, interview with Kjell Sundvall, own transl.)

The idea that one cannot stereotype oneself or members of one's own group is a common misconception. Willis (1977) and Williamson (1995) unravel the complex mechanisms of 'internal othering' when identities of class, race and sexism are also reproduced by those who may suffer the most from the representations.

> "One person came with five liters of moonshine the morning after. And in Älvsbyn five liters of moonshine is like five stars in Aftonbladet." (*Aftonbladet* 7 February 1996, interview with Kjell Sundvall, own transl.)

Even though the film represented the residents of Älvsbyn in unfavorable ways, *The Hunters* had its premiere there, where the film was set and produced, instead of in Stockholm where film premieres usually take place. Despite the negative representations, more than half the population saw the film. These kinds of representations of a place's 'culture' should not be confused with how people identify themselves in reality. In other contexts, the population of Älvsbyn may make an effort to minimize the difference between themselves and the centers in the South; however, popular culture is often seen as practices by which stereotypes and insults are not to be taken

seriously. Humor can be used as a strategy to laugh at, but also to lay bare, the asymmetric relationships between centers and peripheries (see Paulgaard, 2008). News articles about the film commented on the special way its director, now living in Stockholm, connected with the inhabitants of his former home village.

> "The whole of Älvsbyn is eager to assist during the filming of *The Hunters*. The world premier is of course at the childhood cinema of Kjell Sundvall." (*Göteborgs-posten* 19 September 1995, review in a local newspaper of a large city in south-western Sweden, own transl.)

> "People travelled far to watch the movie. This is definitely some kind of local patriotism." (*Västerbottens-Kuriren* 2 October 2004, review of the special way people in Norrland connect to Norrlandic films, own transl.)

This film that did everything but complement Älvsbyn became part of a tourist attraction, something the municipality still attempts to profit from. 'Hunter contests' are arranged, and it is possible to visit 'Raimo's Bar', the studio built for the movie where the hunters assaulted women and drank their beer (*Aftonbladet* 15 September 2001). Paulgaard (2008) describes this as the marketing and promotion of a place as a cultural product. This construction of a cultural product may literally put a place on the map and bring new visitors and thereby more money to the municipality. This may explain the positive attitudes of locals toward the film. Nevertheless, as asserted by scholars such as Said (1978) and Pred (2004), stereotypes, regardless of where they turn up, reinforce differences and this construction of difference has real material consequences.

> "…as soon as I opened my mouth and the guests heard I was from the North of Sweden, I had to listen to *The Hunters* jokes until 3 a.m. Even today is it the same thing as soon as you go south of Jävre." (*Norrbottens-Kuriren* 4 October 2005, columnist complaining about jokes told by Norwegian tourists, own transl.)

The circulation of citations from diverse discursive fields shows how the film is still frequently used as an allegory of Norrland many years after its premiere. It is a common point of reference in writings about Norrland. *The Hunters* as a symbol of the Norrland mentality and lifestyle is employed by national media and politicians, as well as by the Norrlandians themselves. Representations of Norrlandians in *The Hunters* cannot be ignored by ordinary people, media or politicians. Norrlandians are confronted with these restless stereotypes on a daily basis in a variety of ways.

> "The county governor Per Ola Eriksson says the poaching has to be gotten under control as it gives Norrbotten a bad reputation." (*Norrbottens-Kuriren* 25 October 2003, news item, own transl.)

> "…those representations – whether or not largely invented – actually become a condition of the minority Other's everyday practical and political experience" (Pred, 2004:6).

Already in 2004, rumors started about the making of a sequel to *The Hunters* (*Aftonbladet*, 2 December 2004). A couple years later, Kjell Sundvall asserts that he now has enough material to make a new movie, referring to the murder of a young woman in Norrbotten during hunting season:

> "Kjell Sundvall had started to abandon the thought of a follow-up to *Jägarna*. But then came the murder of Carolin Stenvall. The pieces suddenly fell into place. 'I'm not making any tourist film for Norrbotten', says the director…" (NSD 8 July 2010, news item)

*Jägarna* 2 will be released in 2011 and is set in the Norrbotten municipality of Överkalix. Some local journalists express their excitement, but not everyone is convinced of the positive effects of the film. Nonetheless, most journalists seem to agree that the film will have material effects:

> "It doesn't matter that the film is set in the beautiful nature of Norrbotten if at the same time it's populated by half-thinking, snuff-using, rifle-shooting Neanderthals. The free publicity Överkalix will get will thus rather be in the form of a Norrlandic freakshow. Nothing that really encourages people to move there. If I'm allowed to wish for something from *Jägarna 2* it's nuances and a basis in reality. Beautiful views without Neanderthals, and with real people instead." (NSD, 26 May 2010, chronicle).

## 5.5 Film and geographies of differences

Similar to most other modern films, the narrative in *The Hunters* is structured with certain principles to evoke feelings and emotions about characters according to values we are expected to share. We are spoken to as if we already held the same field of vision. Through these processes, individuals are grouped into categories of 'we' with a given set of values and identities, and categories of 'others' – groups of individuals who are represented as different with traditional and primitive values we are not expected to identify with. The groups of 'we' and 'others' are social constructions but have distinct and

factual material consequences; Filmmakers contribute to these social constructs whether it is intentional or not.

This analysis shows how the movie *The Hunters* reworks, reshapes and reconstructs representations of Norrland by drawing on history, political discussions and debate in the news media as well as on international genre-specific stereotypes. It shows how representation in popular culture becomes enmeshed with representation in the news media and politics, and how this have material effects in that it helps obscure geography and class by way of positioning representations of the middle class in urban spaces and the white working class in rural spaces, and by way of constructing class as a choice of lifestyle or culture. Space becomes gendered, racialized and classified.

# 6. Selling Norrland

The previous chapter dealt with popular imaginings of Norrland and the way film representations become part of the discourse on Norrland through the blending of representations through a mixture of discursive practices. Characters and events constructed by a director and screenwriter also become part of the representations of Norrland in the news media. What is possible to say within different discursive practices and genres is sliding through "fictionalized facts" and "factualized fiction" (Pred, 2004:xii). All representations have some kind of claim on truth, and even though most people view the representations in popular culture as stereotyping and exaggerations, they may become part of identity projects and be reproduced also by those who may suffer from the stereotypes.

Like the previous chapter the following section analyzes how politicians, place marketers and businesses reproduce, rework and sometimes resist/transgress the discourses on Norrland. Yet, this chapter goes somewhat further to show how discourses on globalization and international competition play a part in the construction of places in Norrland and how Norrland (like any other place) is made up of the interaction between different global and local processes. This chapter analyzes various actors – commercial and political – and how they reproduce, rework and resist representations of Norrland. This highlights the need to recognize the unequal and questionable ways places in Norrland may be known or produced for consumption.

This chapter contributes to the aim of the thesis by showing how neoliberal discourses on competitiveness and growth contribute to enhancing the urban/rural, modern/traditional binary in Sweden and how stereotypes of Norrland (or the 'North') are used to sell products, but also shows that the ways places are marketed and commodified may play a part in the reproduction of stereotypes as well as become tools for resistance.

The chapter is divided into two main parts: "Place marketing" and "Reworking place by selling". I start by briefly explaining the practice of place marketing and the processes of inclusion and exclusion. Place marketing is commonly associated with urban areas, and here I give some brief examples of how rural municipalities typically market themselves and make use of their relative location when dealing with the hegemonic discourses on neoliberal globalization. Moreover, the place marketing of the city of Umeå in its bid to become the European Capital of Culture provides an example of how Norrland is constituted by its relations to other places and how the representations of Norrland in a national context conflict with the representa-

tions in this specific European context. Finally, I discuss the attempts to define Norrland through the commodification of the indigenous Sámi people, and the other way around.

The second part of the chapter, "Reworking place by selling", deals with some well known products associated with Norrland. These products become part of identity projects and subsequently part of the discourse on Norrland, sometimes by way of reproducing stereotypes and sometimes by resisting them.

The material to choose from is infinite, and representations (well known or not) all contribute to the discourse. However, I have chosen notable examples since these representations become more powerful in the shaping of discourse. Besides commenting on Umeå's bid to become the European Capital of Culture in the first section, I also briefly analyze the marketing of the beer 'Norrlands Guld', commercials for which have existed since 1996, and the dairy products of 'Norrmejeriet', with ads that reach the Norrland dairy consumer every day. In addition, I comment on a less commercial product that seems more to rework the representations of Norrland.

## 6.1 Place marketing

In modern capitalist nations, attractive places may include an exclusive local neighbourhood, a progressive and prosperous region, or places made up of representations of Hollywood ideals. Naturally, we have different ideas of what makes a place attractive but some places, more than others, are represented to us as attractive. These representations come from popular culture, the news media, politicians, friends and so on. What makes a place attractive is its representations as, for instance, modern and hip, 'authentic' or exclusive (e.g. Florida, 2002).

As outlined previously, the 1980s and onward witnessed the emergence of processes of neoliberalization; political structures and ideologies that are based on the notions of privatization and deregulation. Thus, in Western nations, infrastructures previously provided by the government in the public interest and the provision of utilities and safety net services have been redirected by development coalitions of public institutions, private individuals and business leaders to concern various corporate activities aimed at attracting mobile investment capital and tourists (Kearns and Philo, 1993). Therefore, places are now increasingly being sold as commodities on a 'place market', or as Hall (2005:102) puts it, "Places are now commodities to be produced and consumed". This marketing operation involves the construction of particular identities, images and representations of place that can compete

for international capital within the global economy. These strategies to attract wealthy tourists and residents increase rather than reduce the socio-economic differences not only within a city but also between the urban and the rural within a nation (Harvey, 2000; 2006).

Place marketing or place branding is about reproducing, reworking and resisting the images of a place; Hence the goal of the place marketer is to selectively represent a place and to construct a place that is desirable according to politicians and businessmen (Hall, 2005). The successful (urban) place is portrayed as tolerant and cool, attracting talented and 'creative' people (see e.g. Florida, 2002). Many social groups and interests are excluded in these representations, such as homeless people, the old, immigrants and those with a weaker socio-economic position. The representations of the city as part of the 'urban turn' in geography describe the cosmopolitan street life, where the urban face-to-face contact is seen as a driving force in the flow of experiences and knowledge (e.g. Storper and Venables, 2004).

Recent research on cosmopolitanism and new urban citizenship celebrates the big city as forging new hybrid cultures and ways of living together with difference. Gill Valentine (2007; 2008) describes this research as a new turn within geography and urban studies: "After a decade or so in which the city was characterized as site of crime, conflict and withdrawal (…), the city of the twenty-first century is being re-imagined as a site of connection" (Valentine, 2008:324). She is skeptical about much of the writings on cosmopolitanism and new urban citizenship, and asserts that this research reproduces a romanticization of urban encounters. Her research shows that the much-celebrated urban mixing of cultures in public space (e.g. Young, 2002; Boyd, 2006; Laurier and Philo, 2006; Thrift, 2005) does not necessarily translate into respect for difference; On the contrary, her empirical examples show that many of the daily brief encounters with difference leave attitudes and values unmoved or even hardened.

To understand why certain images of place are produced, we need to ask in whose interest places are being constructed, promoted and revitalized. As many scholars assert, the promotion and marketing of a place is not a 'natural' process, but is rather a product of political debate and struggle (Hudson, 2000; Ward, 1998). McDowell (1999) highlights the need to recognize the uneven and contested ways places may be known or produced for consumption. Economic and cultural elites are molding the contemporary urban landscape, and business interest groups dominate the tourism policy-making process (Harvey, 1989; Hall, 2005). Cities such as London, New York and Tokyo hold a structural advantage and serve as role models for less successful places (Massey, 2004).

*Growing* cities, municipalities and regions are consequently viewed as prosperous and successful places, at least in many western nations. Local politicians and companies are engaged in place branding and keep close track of population increase and decrease. In already sparsely populated areas there are few in-migrants, and those moving out are primarily younger people. This has an impact on a region's age composition, which affects the tax base. Local policy makers are becoming increasingly aware of the need to attract in-migrants, preferably people with entrepreneurial skills who can be a part of the local workforce (Fotheringham et al., 2000). Here, migration becomes part of the production and reproduction of place, and thereby an important characteristic of the place, not only when it comes to demographic aspects but also when it comes to people's ideas about certain people and places.

The hegemonic discourse on what makes a 'successful place' produces "serial reproduction" of policies (Harvey, 1989:10) and mainstream representations of place that typically include 'accessibility', 'relative costs of location', 'educated labor force', 'quality of life' and possible 'state assistance for location' (Hall, 2005). Hence, every place marketer needs to promote the unique characteristics, arguably often the culture, history and nature of the place. Since all places carry multiple histories and cultures (Mitchell, 2000) and not any unique or single identity, representations of selected place identities involve the representation of partial histories, silencing certain groups and events. Yet, it becomes important to construct a desirable identity and history, a distinctive character of the place and at the same time present the 'culture' of the place as commodities to be consumed and utilized. It is about offering attractive amenities to visitors and potential residents, at the same time as it is about having control over the production of space, over who is allowed in and who is kept out, over what behavior is acceptable in that space. The production of new spaces is a complex dialectic operating through ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality and so forth (Mitchell, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Recent research on causes of regional economic development claims that workers selectively migrate to cities that are favored with the relevant amenities. Scholars such as Florida (2002) have stressed the importance of population dynamics, tolerance and diversity in attracting a 'creative class'. Florida (2002), as well as researchers such as Glaeser (2005), suggest that places that can attract people with high levels of human capital will grow rapidly because of the entrepreneurial, creative and innovative energies these people carry with them. These theories have had a great impact on the politics of place marketing and specifically recommend that policy makers focus on investments in K-12 education, low tax rates, crime reduction, new housing development and amusement.

The ways research on regional economic development classifies people into desirable and less desirable inhabitants are criticized by scholars such as Herod (1997), who assert that economic geographers ignore the role of the workers in creating the economic geography. Similarly, Storper and Scott (2009) are critical of many of these theories and do not believe these ideas have autonomous effects on urban growth or per capita income. Furthermore, they acknowledge that high-wage and low-wage workers are strongly complementary to one another in the new economy (Storper and Scott, 2009; Malanga, 2004 and Levy and Murnane, 2004; Philo and Kearns, 1993).

Research on place marketing by Ward (1998) and Owen (2002) has emphasized the marginalization and displacement of poor people as part of redevelopment schemes producing a 'safe' and 'sanitized' place (e.g. 'cleaning up' deteriorated inner-city places). In the same way, research by Philo and Kearns (1993) and Richard Ek (2007) suggests that place marketing is more about attracting mobile capital, investors, potential residents and visitors with money to spend than serving the people of the community, city or region. Hence, images are manipulated to create a sense of consensus in order to convince people that all sorts of 'good things' are being done on their behalf. The future of 'the economy' is mobilized as a persuasive argument for place promotion and tourism development, even though the strategies may imply further marginalization of disprivileged groups (Hall, 2005; Philo and Kearns, 1993) (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: The sign reads "The Umeå arts campus is being built here – a big step in Umeå's development." A question one might ask is: Who says? And for whom is this an important development? Own photo taken in August, 2010.

Most research on place marketing has evolved around urban examples (for exceptions see Gibson and Davidson, 2004). Nonetheless, the involvement in place marketing seems to be even greater among rural than urban municipalities in Sweden (Niedomysl, 2006).

As we have argued previously, rural areas in the North are associated with population loss, disinvestments and the retreat of the welfare state such as through reductions in the public sector. In some areas this situation has brought about an economic restructuring toward the tourism sector (Lundmark, 2005). And for a while now Swedish rural places, particularly in the mountains of northern Sweden, have made efforts to market themselves, for tourism but also to attract more residents. Arguably, place marketing is also about repositioning a place within a national geographical imagination (Niedomysl, 2006).

Hence, the place marketing in northern Sweden may differ from more urbanized examples (see e.g. Gibson and Davidson, 2004). Aware of what makes a place attractive within a neoliberal discourse and of the difficulty of competing with places that possess luxurious housing complexes, large industries, opera houses and concert halls, as shown in the quote below, rural places need to promote other amenities, such as here in the case of the county of Jämtland:

> "Competence usually gathers in clusters, experts attract experts. But in today's world, ideas and knowledge are rarely any further than the nearest socket. Bearing this in mind, you can take part without attending. You can move without travelling. You can influence decisions on the other side of the globe, poised in a comfortable chair behind double-glazed terrace windows, overlooking a freshwater river." (Jamtland. 2009)

Previous research suggests that the rural may be marketed as providing a more 'pure' and simple lifestyle, national values and traditions in contrast to the city with its crime and disorder (Mitchell, 1998; Hopkins, 1998). On the official websites of the counties and municipalities in Norrland, the municipalities are represented in contrast to the stressful urban life, and are said to provide a safe place for children, cheap housing and an active outdoor lifestyle with closeness to nature. Emphasis is put on representations of rural alternative lifestyles and 'quality of life' with breathing space you cannot get in the city.

Sorsele is a municipality in the inland of Västerbotten, and is the second smallest municipality in Sweden when it comes to population and one of the largest when it comes to size (Statistics Sweden, 2009). Below is a typical turn of phrase in the marketing of the inland municipalities:

> "By moving to Sorsele municipality you can get better quality in life. Wherever you choose to live within the municipality you are always

close to magnificent nature. Sorsele municipality is 75 square kilometers large and has a living environment almost without comparison." (Sorsele Municipality, 2010)

Many rural municipalities have taken part in place marketing campaigns that attempt to attract inhabitants and businesses. One of the most evident and drastic examples of this manifested itself in a trade fair at the Stockholm central station on May 20-21, 2010. Rural municipalities from the whole of Sweden that are struggling with declining populations promoted themselves at the central station as part of a campaign called 'Flytta hit' (Eng. Move here). These municipalities are struggling to attract new residents from Stockholm (preferably families with children and skilled people) by offering an alternative (rural) lifestyle as opposed to the stressful city life, cheap housing, safety and help with starting up businesses (flytta-hit, 2010). The yearly magazine *Flytta hit* is part of the campaign; Here the rural municipalities attempt to represent the rural as modern and progressive by presenting those living there as sensible, conscious, sincere and environmentally aware, as opposed to the representations of people in the countryside as stubbornly refusing the modern urban life. Thus, the representations of the rural must necessarily be reworked in order to attract an urban middle class.

Another similar project, launched in 2004, attempted to attract unemployed immigrants to Norrland. The campaign was called 'Enad Kraft' (Eng. United Power) and was a collaboration between the city of Göteborg, Norrlands Förbundet, ESF (The European Social Fund) and a few municipalities in Dalarna and Norrland.[47] The project intended to persuade immigrants and refugees in Göteborg to move to Norrland and Dalarna. This, asserted the participants, would benefit everyone:

"By the year 2015 close to 50% of the workforce in Norrland will have retired. If this decline can't be replaced with a new workforce we can expect a crisis in Swedish society."

"The *Enad Kraft* project aims to contribute in a concrete way to solving the problems of sustaining a qualified workforce in the northern Swedish municipalities as well as segregation issues in the large cities." (Göteborg, 2010 own transl.)

Immigrants and refugees are depicted as problematic when they gather in cities like Göteborg. The problem with segregation in Göteborg is simply represented as involving too many immigrants and a shortage of work and

[47] The project started in 2004 and ended in 2007

housing, not the institutionalized racism and discrimination of Sweden and the city of Göteborg. This simple explanation of a complex problem, which has been theorized at length by post-colonial researchers, masks the uneven distribution of political and economic power between people and places in Sweden (see e.g. Pred, 2000).

Different from Göteborg, the rural municipalities participating in the project can offer jobs (mostly within eldercare) and housing to the immigrants. Thus, the project suggested that this arrangement would benefit everyone: Immigrants would be freed from the problems of segregation, and sparsely populated areas with few in-migrants and an elderly population would receive workers and renters for their residences. And Göteborg would be freed from the immigrants.

This example illustrates the interplay between discourses on the creative city and representations of ethnicity and class – how growing cities depict certain inhabitants as attractive and others as unwanted. Particular groups, such as workers and racialized immigrants, are less attractive than, for instance, highly educated youths from Western nations. However, in places with few in-migrants and an elderly population, even immigrants may receive a hearty welcome.

Using this example, it may be just as possible to see 'respect for difference and a site of connection' within sparsely populated areas as within big cities.

### *6.1.1 Commodification of Norrland and the Sámi*

The place marketing that aims to attract tourists coincides with the marketing for new residents. Hence, the tourism marketing of places in Norrland is largely surrounded by myth and exoticism. Exotic representations of Lappland (a northern province of Finland as well as a northern province of Sweden) are reproduced by local authorities in the provinces, but also by the travel industry. Large travel companies have successfully place branded Lappland. Arguably, today the region is commonly known as the home of Santa Claus, due to the extreme commodification of Finnish Lappland and the Finnish Sámi: Finnish Lappland is by far the more well known and visited of the two provinces, offering "a surreal conglomerate of Nordic Christmas traditions and Sami culture" (Müller and Pettersson, 2001:8).

One important aspect of the representations of the rural is the rural idyll as a symbol of the nation (Lowe et al., 1995). The rural becomes representations of old traditions and authenticity. The establishments of national parks is indeed a way to preserve the nation as it used to be. Indigenous populations,

rare flowers and unique nature are often the foremost representatives of nations. In some instances this may cause paradoxical representations, for instance when marketing Sweden abroad.

In Swedish tax-free shops and at Swedish tourist destinations, Norrland, or the North, is promoted as being a vital part of Sweden. In these shops you can buy exotic images of the North and of Sweden: moose, reindeer, mountains, snow, the Sámi people, meat from moose and reindeer, jam made from berries picked in the North, artwork made by the Sámi people. Occasionally one can find T-shirts and mugs with Stockholm motifs, but in the international marketing of Sweden, Norrland is an important and essential part of the discourse on Sweden.

The Sámi are also an increasingly commodified feature of the Swedish Lappland. A survey of promotional material provided by municipal and county administrations in northern Sweden showed that about 50% of all brochures featured pictures of the Sámi and of different aspects of a real and imagined "Sámi culture" (Pettersson, 1999). Historical and contemporary research on representations of the Sámi point to the reproduction of them as traditional people, either as noble savages living close to nature or as barbarians – uncivilized and backward (Lundmark, 1999; Pietkäinen, 2003; Olsen, 2006). Olsen (2006) shows the enduring representations of the Sámi, stating that features found in the first exhibition on the Sámi in London in 1822 are still found in tourist brochures today.

Representations of the Sámi as barbarians are typically traced to the 1800s and are considered a consequence of nationalism and colonialism and the theories associated with nation-building and imperialism. These were theories that came to justify the abusive social relations of slavery and colonialism, such as the taxonomic practice of Linneaus in dividing Homo Sapiens into "lazy, dishonest, governed by caprice" (Homo Afer) and "inventive, perceptive, meticulous, and law abiding" (Homo Europaeus) (Pred, 2004: 10).

Linneaus's famous trip to Lappland also contributed to the further colonization of what had been referred to for some time as "our India", as described in Chapter 3. After his visit to Lappland, he assigned the Sámi to a special racial freak category called "Monstrosus", the lowest of all human races (Broberg, 1975). In the global discourse on colonialism, the Sámi became an integrated part:

> "[N]ot without reasons the Lapps may be termed Northern ethiopians." (Broberg, 1975, quoted in Pred, 2004:11)

At the end of 1800s the Swedish policy "The Lapp should be a Lapp" tried to uphold the traditional life of the reindeer-herding population by sheltering them from the modern world. The Sámi who were reindeer herders were considered 'noble savages', not fit for any other life than that of the nomad, which resulted in several regulations that led to deteriorated living conditions for the Sámi people.

The present representations of the noble savage are commonly found in ads promoting eco-tourism, in which the Sámi are attributed with features such as ecological awareness, peacefulness and mysticism, features that by all accounts are not found in discourses on modernity (Müller and Pettersson; Olsen, 2006). The othering of the Sámi is an essential aspect of the tourism industry; It is about displaying a traditional way of life and downplaying the modern Sámi of today. In the quest to live up to the expectations of tourists, the Sámi need to display 'authenticity' and avoid carrying modern attributes. The modern Sámi are considered a problem for successful tourism development, as representations of the 'other', 'natives' and 'authenticity' are essential to the commodification of all tourism places (Müller and Pettersson, 2001). This othering contributes to the discourse on the Sámi and indigenous people as noble savages and not yet modernized (Pettersson and Viken, 2007; Olsen, 2006; Müller and Pettersson, 2001). Müller and Pettersson (2001) suggest a link between representations of the Sámi and the promotion of northern Sweden as part of the Arctic and as Europe's last wilderness. The Sámi as a noble savage has come to be closely connected to representations of the last wilderness and the Arctic Circle.

Like any other culture, the 'Sámi culture' is socially constructed. In the marketing of the Sámi culture as 'other', the culture of 'us' is simultaneously reproduced. The 'Swedish culture' is reproduced as a contrast to the different other. Following Mitchell (2000), the idea of culture exists as a means of ordering and defining the world. The power of 'culture' lies in its ability to be used to describe, label or shape activities into stable entities, so that they can be named as an attribute of a people. Culture is an idea, in itself possessing no explanatory value; 'Culture', just like race and gender, is a social category and not an essential thing (Mitchell, 2000). Hence, to describe what is commonly regarded as 'Sámi' is to reproduce the *idea* of the Sámi culture.

The Western claim of one single modernity, with the dualistic thinking of tradition vs. change and tradition vs. development, overrules non-Western versions of modernity. As an attraction, the ethnic and the indigenous constitute another time and category than the modern (Pred and Watts, 1992; Massey, 2005). The touristic construction and preservation of the Sámi culture resemble the Swedish policy at the end of 1800s, "The Lapp should be a

Lapp". By way of sheltering the Sámi from the modern world, the construction of the Sámi within tourism denies the Sámi their own modernity.

Parts of northern Sweden become intrinsically connected with the Sámi. In order to sell the representations of the Sámi, the Sámi must be constructed and defined. The Sámi 'culture' has to be reshaped in a form that is recognizable to tourists. The Sámi become one with reindeer herding, traditional costumes and handicraft. Moreover, they also become part of a discourse on northern Sweden as remote, wild nature – everything in order to attract attention to a place, to commodify it and 'sell' it on a global market.

As long as a quest for difference and otherness are motivations for travel and tourism, the people and places that can promote difference and exoticism have an advantage in the tourism industry. The 'difference' of these people and places may be their only advantage; Ethnicity is reduced to a highly sought-after commodity:

> "The commodification of Otherness has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling. Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture." (hooks, 1992:21)

Those who in other contexts contest the representations of otherness and difference may exploit representations of indigenous populations to attract visitors. Tourist destinations in northern Sweden are represented similar to how they were during the time of the area's colonization (see Chapter 2), as "The last wilderness of Europe" and "Wild and beautiful". Associations with the Sámi are part of this marketing of wilderness and nature. Municipalities in the North that are mainly associated with depopulation and unemployment are taking advantage of the exotic images of Lappland produced by travel companies. The use of Sámi symbols are disparate and merely suggest a Sámi presence, as the Sámi culture is used as a seasoning for the otherwise dull and mainstream representations of place. The growing tourism industry has transformed ethnicity and exotic cultural differences into an "easily approachable form of colonialism" (Ridanpää, 2007:17).

### *6.1.2 Capital of culture in the North*

Umeå is a city in Västerbotten with 114,000[48] inhabitants, which makes it the largest city in northern Sweden but one of the smallest to be the Europe-

[48] Compared to the number in the first quotation, Umeå's population has grown by 2,000 people.

an Capital of Culture. It is also the northernmost European Capital of Culture ever (Umeå2014, 2008).

> "[Umeå is]… one of Sweden's fastest growing cities. The average age of the 112 000 people who live in Umeå is 38. They intend to increase their numbers — the goal is to pass the 200 000 figure before 2050. The city offers world-class art, drama, films, industries, music and research. It aims to attract more companies, break new construction records and, not least become the European Capital of Culture 2014." (Umeå Municipality, 2009)

It has become a taken-for-granted fact that the promotion of culture is important for post-industrial cities. The aim of this investment in culture may be inspired by theories, outlined previously, on how to attract creative people, people with high levels of human capital. A city is expected to grow rapidly if inhabited by entrepreneurial and creative people (Florida, 2002; 2003; 2004; Glaeser, 2005). Hence, in order to create an exciting city of consumption, Umeå is aiming for a population increase and is being reconstructed with attractive buildings on the waterfront, and is making new investments in culture and entertainment as well as marketing 'alternative lifestyles' and 'cultures'. It might be argued that the local authorities are making serious efforts to redefine the image of place. But, paradoxically, in order for Umeå to win the bid to become the European Capital of Culture, the city must necessarily be represented as northern, 'alternative', unusual and exotic. The discourses on globalization assign identities to us (Massey, 2004), which affect the way places such as Umeå are represented:

> "This campaign is on behalf of the Northernmost region of Europe, which wants to see itself not as on the periphery of Europe, but as part of its heart…" (Umeå2014, 2008)

The event is expected to generate growth and profit, first because of the people visiting the city, but also because of the intensive media attention which, in the long run, is expected to attract more tourists and the establishment of new businesses.

The promotion of Umeå is a repetition of place marketing buzz-words (see e.g. Hall, 2005; Umeå Municipality, 2009). Umeå is promoted as a young, growing, cultural city with successful businesses. Similar to other cities, the emphasis is on culture as a contrast to the promotion of nature by rural municipalities. At the same time as the city is struggling to create an image of a modern and creative city to distance itself from representations of 'Norrland', the application to become the European Capital of Culture relies on

exotic place representations as part of the marketing strategy. Umeå is drawing on the uniqueness of the North and its historically peripheral position, and is trying to separate its physical from its imaginative geography (see Figure 13):

> "We are at the edge geographically, yet at the cutting edge in how we use our diversity of imagination." (Umeå2014, 2008)

Nonetheless, Umeå is taking advantage of its relative immediacy to Lappland, again using the Sámi people as "seasoning" (hooks, 1992), a seduction of difference and a selling argument, implying openness and diversity. In order to win the competition among places, to become the European Capital of Culture, Umeå has to play the indigenous card and simultaneously represent itself as a modern city and as a place that still embraces the old Sámi calendar. "The proposed 2014 programme consists of eight themes, inspired by the eight seasons in the Sami (sic) calendar." (Umeå Capital of Culture, 2008:35). Despite of the steering committee assurance that the Sami will participate on their own terms, Åkerlund and Müller (submitted) mention the worries of some stakeholders regarding the enhancement of the Sámi culture.

The non-city stakeholders (other municipalities in the Umeå region[49]) also worry that they will invest much and gain little from the event. It is hard not to see the strong urban focus of the event, but the idea is that the whole region of Umeå will benefit from the focus on the city of Umeå, that the small surrounding municipalities' chances will improve in the competition to attract visitors and capital. This is a well known argument: Through supporting the success of already big and wealthy actors, something will trickle down to the less successful ones as well (Harvey, 2006).

In order to compete with other cities around Europe, Umeå has broadened the term 'culture' to include much more than what is commonly associated with culture in this context. For instance, culture in Umeå includes storytelling, sports, communication, urban development, recreation and the quality of life in general. According to the steering committee, this inclusive take on 'culture' is also a way to point out that everyone in Umeå is potentially creative:

> "We aim to find and to fully take advantage of the gathered creativity we know exists in Umeå. It will take great commitment, not only from

[49] The surrounding small municipalities of Vännäs, Vindeln, Bjurholm, Robertsfors and Nordmaling will contribute to financing the event.

> the municipality and established culture institutions, but also from the volunteers and professional culture workers, the business community, the young and old audience, the athletes and everybody else with an interest in creating a better place to live!" (Umeå Capital of Culture, 2007)

Yet, through the redefining of the concept of 'culture' and the reworking of some representations of northernness and peripherality, a space for resistance can be created. The representations in the application (Umeå2014, 2008) may reproduce northern Sweden as peripheral, but even so the discourse on the peripheral may be reworked through art, sports, communication and so on, similar to how the Sámi may be given a space and a voice of their own.

But this resistance and attempt to create spaces for everyone may come into conflict with the urgent pursuit of growth, which is part of the neoliberal competitive discourse that initially made Umeå apply to the competition. This is a competitive reality, which naturally implies that some become empowered while others become suppressed. Within this competitive discourse politicians may justify political decisions, and place marketers their mere existence:

> "Globalization and the rapid technological development have brought matters to a head regarding place marketing. Today, Umeå is competing with the rest of the world to attract new residents, students and businesses and to create economic conditions for a good community. It's therefore not an option to slack off. We have to be on our toes at all times. Otherwise, we'll be left by the wayside. That's how tough the competition is. (Umeå Municipality, 2010 own transl.)

Figure 13: This image is a part of the place marketing of Umeå. The birch symbolizes Umeå. The centers and peripheries represent the result of negotiable power relations; Hence, this globe is turned around, moved back and forth, and even the smallest of villages may construct its own globe with itself at the center. The many maps and globes that depict unexpected centers are representations that challenge the present center/periphery structure. At the same time, these representations often reproduce the power geometry by positioning the challenging center in relation to the 'real' centers. This play on cartography is a play on power, and thus a play on people's sense of identity; with feelings of exclusion and inclusion and with feelings of optimism and desolation.
With permission.

## 6.2 Reworking place by selling

In the present Western world, we define others and ourselves through the consumption of things and images. Things, such as a pair of shoes, may become desirable because of the images they project, as stated at the very beginning of this thesis: Things and the representations of things are impossible to separate. The things and images we consume tell us something about the society we inhabit. Cultural hegemony, in Gramsci's sense, may be evident when we buy into the images or representations of our society, images defined through what we buy and consume such as political ideas, fair-trade products; chocolate with royalist motifs, music or locally produced dairy products from Norrland. Moreover, the things we buy and consume become part of our identities. Potential consumers are identified, categorized and labeled, something is provided for everyone, but the distinction between people is reproduced through the targeting and catering of products of varying quality made by industries. Cultural theorists such as Adorno and Horkheimer (1993) go so far as to state that individual and group expressions are only possible through the buying of commodities. Following Mitchell (2000:170), I partly agree, but we ought to "retake and reshape commodities" (because commodities are all we see), to make our own history and a new geography.

Several commercials draw on images of Norrland. Two of the most well known and visible campaigns are those of the beer brand Norrlands Guld[50] and the dairy producer Norrmejeriet[51]. These two examples would easily justify a chapter of their own, but I will only give a brief account of the Norrland representations in these commercials and products.

Advertising reproduces, resists and reworks social norms in order to sell a product or a message. Scholars such as Lippke (1995) argue that advertising influences how we perceive and conceive our lives and the world we live in, but that it also shapes the kinds of options we see as available to us and the standards by which we judge ourselves and others. In other words, advertising representations influence different conceptions of identity, and must be understood as the result of altering social and cultural practices. Thus, I am interested in the meanings of the commercials as I view them as the result of historical contingencies. I am concerned with recent developments in representing the rural and urban, class and gender, influenced by discourses on

[50] Since 1989 this beer brand has been owned by the large Swedish brewery Spendrups (Spendrups, 2004).

[51] Norrmejeriet is a cooperative economic association owned by 630 farmers in Norrbotten, Västerbotten and Västernorrland. Norrmejeriet sells products locally, but some products are also sold on the national market (Norrmejerier, 2010).

neoliberalism, for instance regarding ideals of mobility, urbanity and productivity.

As asserted by Schroeder and Zwick (2004), research on advertising commonly focuses on the actual content of advertisements: what the ad says, how it links the product to individual traits and experiences, or simply the ad's design. Indeed, these issues are important to analyze. Yet, advertising also functions as a representational system that reproduces meaning outside the realm of the advertised product. For example, following Bourdieu (1984) and others (e.g. Ryan, 2010), the production of taste is still one of advertising's most important aims. Consumption remains an important marker of social class, but also of other collective identities.

> "The idea of culture, then, becomes a means for judging other societies, of factions of *this* society, to determine how they 'measure up' to the needs of the global economy, and thus to devise strategies for keeping them properly in line, putting them properly to work, or properly catering their 'tastes'. 'Culture', as both produced and consumed, then, is a primary ingredient in geographically uneven systems of social reproduction." (Mitchell, 2000:80-81)

The choices we make are made in opposition to those made by other classes or other groups of people we do not want to identify with (Bourdieu 1984; Ryan, 2010). Today many ads barely mention the advertised product, which is often shown in the background while presumptive consumers are asked to translate the meaning from the appearance of the people in the ad – their image, looks and way of life – onto the product (Williamson 1978; Schroeder and Zwick, 2004).

### *6.2.1 Norrlands guld*

Since the first commercial for Norrlands Guld was shown in 1996, the ads have barely escaped any Swede. They consist of a set of well made ads[52] that in a mundane way play with stereotypes of the Norrland man, as described in previous chapters. According to the company, the commercials have been very successful and sales have increased since the ads were launched (Spendrups, 2008). Norrlands Guld was first regarded as a cheap and outmoded beer during the time it was called 'Norrlands öl' (Eng. Norrland's beer) and

[52] The commercials have received several awards (Spendrups, 2004). Besides being shown on TV, the well known characters from the commercials have been featured on the radio, in a guide to Norrland and on billboard ads. Moreover, Norrlands Guld is known around the world as the beer is also sold outside Sweden by the IKEA retail chain. Thus, in other parts of the world Norrlands Guld is associated with Sweden (Spendrups, 2004).

manufactured by its originator, a small brewery operating in Västernorrland and Sollefteå (1965-1989). The scenery of Sollefteå is still depicted on the beer's label, but the representations of and metonyms for the beer have changed (Spendrups, 2004; 2007).

The central message of the ads is that people (men) from Norrland (who of course drink Norrlands Guld) are generally more laid back and free from pretension. The themes of the commercials have been variations on the phrase "Om du vill vara dig själv för en stund" (Eng. If you want to be yourself for a while). The commercials signal authenticity, naturalness and a lack of prestige, but the characters in the commercials are also hopelessly old-fashioned and unsophisticated; They resemble the stereotypes of truck drivers or lumberjacks. The principal characters are laid-back men who live a simple life with their pals, drinking their beer and not speaking unnecessarily. Only sporadically do women appear in the ads, and when they do they are courted by awkward but sympathetic Norrland men who are rarely successful in their quest. This is an important part of the commercials; The traditional Norrland masculinity as discussed in previous chapters, in contrast to an urban masculinity, is represented as affected and silly (from the perspective of traditional Norrland men). Norrlands Guld is now a trendy and ironic beverage, but can also be consumed without irony by those who identify with the stereotypes. The stereotypes are simultaneously signifying positive and negative values: authenticity and backwardness. In this way irony represents a political double code, in that its object is always being simultaneously legitimized and criticized. The practice of jokes and irony may reproduce existing social relations and normative social boundaries (Ridanpää, 2007).

Ridanpää (2007) suggests that marginalized regions and minority groups may not only be the objects of irony, but also that stereotypes of people in marginalized regions imply an incapability to understand irony. These 'regional prejudices' may then result in jokes that often assume, in the Swedish case, a sophisticated South and a backwoods North. Another factor is the distribution between rural and urban populations.

Since 2008, the Norrlands Guld ads have been modified,[53] replacing the old characters with more modern ones (Spendrups, 2008). Instead of depicting life in rural Norrland, these more recent commercials evolve around the shallow life in the city. A recent commercial (*I wanna go home, 2010*)[54] pictured stiff cultural workers in black, boring business meetings in white pol-

53 "Our surveys show that many see Norrlands Guld as an introverted brand. Now we're replacing the quiet Ingmar with Anders who's younger and a little more modern and social than Ingmar, says Erik Jarnsjö, Marketing Director for beer at Spendrups", *Dagens Media*, March 27, 2008, own transl).

54 The TV advertising can be found on Norrlands Guld homepage: http://www.norrlandsguld.nu/#/4/pa_tv

ished conference rooms, overcrowded busses and insipid suburbs. To the soundtrack of the Swedish rock band *Sator* (*I wanna go home*)[55], viewers are left with a sense of urban dread and a wish to return home to the simple life in Norrland. This new advertising inverts and transforms the representations of the Norrland man. Here he is modern and cool, with the ability to adjust to very different situations in both the city and the countryside. Moreover, the former sole focus on male consumers has shifted and women are taking part in the ads, but without following the very sexist tradition of beer brands (Schroeder and Zwick, 2004).

Considering the many people in urban areas with rural backgrounds this is a well considered dramaturgy. As pointed out previously, is it important from a geographical point of view to note that humor is spatially conditioned, that jokes are spatially and temporally specific. Trying to understand jokes, why they are told and to whom, can tell us much about power relations, identities and values in specific places. The commercial described above can be seen as a way to reinvent the rural and its population. This commercial may appeal to those who can identify with the modern and progressive but at the same time wish to identify with the genuine and the authentic, those who identify with both the urban and the rural, such as Norrlandians in Stockholm. This commercial reproduces the urban/rural binarism but also contributes to a reworked notion of Norrland as also a place for modern and successful people, those who measure up to the neoliberal ideals of entrepreneurship and creativity. Needless to say, also for producers of products and marketers, there are more attractive and less attractive people.

> "This film combines the old and new styles, and is the starting shot for a new era. We're going to show a more modern and more attractive Norrland." (Quotation by Erik Jarnsjö, marketing director for Spendrups. *Dagens Media*, 2008 own transl.)

### *6.2.2 Norrmejerier*

Dairy producer Norrmejerier markets its products as "100% Norrlandic". The campaign aims to increase the sales of locally produced products, and the commercials target consumers in Västerbotten, Norrbotten and Västernorrland (although the ads talk about the whole of 'Norrland'). In addition, Norrmejeriet sponsors businesses and events that have something to do with Norrland and what they call 'Norrland values'. According to the company,

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55 "It's funny because when we talked about which brands we could consider working with, Norrlands Guld was one of the first that came up. Sator as a band feel that we fit in and can stand behind the vibe around Norrlands Guld - there are simply big similarities between Norrlands Guld and Sator's position as a classic Swedish rock band" (Quotation by Chips Kiesbye, singer and guitar player in Sator, Spendrups, 2008).

the Norrmejeristipendiet (Eng. The Norrmejeriet Scholarship) is a way to support successful Norrland artists, athletes and others who "do good for Norrland" (Norrmejerier, 2010).

Similar to the commercials of Norrlands Guld, Norrmejeriet (in 2008) also change strategy, from depicting the rural Norrland in commercials to bringing the action to the city (Norrmejerier, 2008). In the TV advertising we meet a Norrland farmer with a coarse dialect in his quest to convince people in the cities to buy the products of Norrland farmers (the products of Norrmejeriet). Slogans include "Gör ett hjälteval – utan ert val går Norrland under" (Eng. Make a heroic choice – without your choice Norrland will vanish!). The ads assert that the products are important to Norrland, in the sense that they contribute to a beautiful landscape, local job openings and a better environment.

As part of the same campaign you can play a game on the company's' website: 'Göra gott spelet' (Eng. The Do-Good Game). The purpose of the game is to illustrate how the consumption of the company's products will lead to a better future for Norrland (It illustrates how a picturesque village evolves with schools, farms, new houses and so on, as you consume the products). In another game on the website you can take part in a quiz to find out how much of a Norrlandian you are. The questions regard dialects, food and winter activities but also authenticity such as how many real friends you have and how content and laid back you are (Norrmejerier, 2010).

Included in the campaign is also merchandise such as T-shirts and pins with the text "I love Norrländskt" (Eng. I love Norrlandic (see Figures 14 and 15). The merchandise can be won in competitions and is also included with the purchase of Norrmejeriet products.

This commercial is appealing to people's identities as Norrlandians and pleads to people's conscience, guilt and sense of responsibility. The representations of Norrland in the ads are highly romanticized, with agricultural landscapes and cattle grazing freely on green hills.

The marketers of these products seek to persuade the potential consumer to adopt a certain view of the world and of Norrland., attempting to define Norrland and make dairy products the bearers of the cultural codes of Norrland. The idea of the Norrland culture – the representations of place, people, phenomena and activities – becomes a key component of the production of value, economic and other. Furthermore, these products become part of the construction of Norrland as well as of Norrland identities.

Figure 14: I love Norrländskt, an ad by Norrmejeriet. Own photo, taken in 2008.

Figure 15: I love Norrländskt, pins included with the purchase of a product from Norrmejeriet. Own photo, taken in 2008.

### *6.2.3 I Love Norrland*

The clothes we wear tell something about who we are (Bourdieu, 1986, Mitchell, 2000). Wearing a T-shirt with the text "I love New York" used to be a way of saying just that, or perhaps: "I have travelled and seen the world! I have seen New York!" The T-shirt became a symbol of mobility and progress, and said something very explicit about its wearer. Today, however, it is sold by large manufacturing companies everywhere and "I love New York" may be considered slightly wishy-washy and is not necessarily evoked and reproduced as a result of a personal experience. Rather, "I love New York" has become a taken-for-granted fact. Wearing one of these T-shirts today may just as well be a way to express a longing to belong to, or at least visit, the famous city. Looking at Figure 14, one must agree with the claims by Jackson (2004:166) that no society can "claim to provide the 'authentic' source of meaning for any particular commodity or cultural form."

In a globalization discourse, Norrland may be viewed as the antithesis of the city of New York. To wear a T-shirt saying "I love Norrland" (Figure 14) is to rework and to perform relational geographies; it may be seen as a way to turn perspectives upside-down and to invert perspectives, but also to reclaim Norrland. These T-shirts are sold in a very hip and 'urban' vintage store/café in Umeå. The context in which these T-shirts are consumed, and who wears the T-shirts, play a part in the reworkings of the meanings of Norrland. This T-shirt can be seen as an example of how to rework and reshape commodities and possibly create a new geography; It can be seen as a space-producing practice (which is rarely only local, global or extra-local) and the result of spatio-temporal events whereby place and mobility are inherently entangled and 'throwntogether' (Mitchell, 2000; Power and Jansson, 2008; Massey, 2005).

Figure 16: T-shirts with the "I love Norrland" motif. Own photo, taken in 2008.

## 6.3 Conclusions

Drawing from scholars such as Gregory (2004), Said (1978) and Pred (2004), my interest has been to show how representations become part of the discursive construction of Norrland. Sometimes producers of discourse may want to tell an alternative story about Norrland, sometimes they reproduce already-established notions of Norrland, and sometimes they use irony to make visible uneven power relations. This may all even be done simultaneously.

As shown previously, the strategy of the neoliberal city is to attract certain groups of people, but also to exclude certain groups. The working class is invisible in the discourse on the creative city, as are certain (working class/racialized/'unqualified') immigrants. This logic of representations further reproduces and reenacts social boundaries and relations of class and

ethnicity. But these relations may have the potential to be disrupted in a rural context where all people are welcome[56].

In the competition between cities, rural areas stand as losers. The only option for many rural municipalities is to make use of the binary rural/urban and the inherited meanings, to make use of the representations of authenticity and nature. But, as I have briefly shown, there are examples of place marketing strategies that aim to attract these urban and attractive people by reworking the representations of the rural, to claim that the rural offers better quality of life and an 'alternative' lifestyle.

Even so, in some instances the selling of Norrland takes more traditional routes in order to attract visitors. In such cases the selling of Norrland may reproduce colonial behavior in that the Sámi are represented as the authentic and exotic inhabitants of Norrland. The clash between the representations of a modern North and an authentic and traditional North becomes apparent in the example in Umeå's bid to become the European Capital of Culture. Norrland is constructed and reproduced relationally and is assigned a certain identity; as peripheral and exotic. The long-term perspective of changing the discourse on Umeå, and the short-term perspective of winning the competition and buying into the representations that sell, collide.

The place marketers of Umeå, but also the marketers of Norrlands Guld and Norrmejeriet realize the importance of attracting consumers from the successful fraction of society; preferably the young, modern and urban. They can "save Norrland" (Norrmejeriet, 2010), or they can momentarily leave their stressful city lives and "be themselves" – that is, at the same time modern, genuine and authentic.

Even if these representations may be exaggerated, distorted and fictional, they are social facts in themselves, because they consist of actually produced texts and images, which constitute actually existing components of discourse, which in turn yield actual social and political effects. Some of these effects will be explored in the next chapter, in which I present interviews with people who experience the discourses on place and mobility in different ways.

[56] For more examples of these relations and their outcomes see, for instance, the photo book on Thai immigration to the Västerbottnic village of Fredrika by Elin Berge (2009).

# 7. Talking about and imagining places

In 1975, geographer Peter Gould undertook a research experiment in which he mapped residential desirability and the travel patterns of adults in Sweden. Gould had an interest in the link between residential location, which he called "spatial information", and mental mapping. Using mental maps made by residents in cities around Sweden, he found that agreement about residential desirability varied depending on location. Furthermore, he found that residents in the South rarely travelled north while residents in the North travelled as much, or more, to the South.[1]

Gould found that people in the southern half of Sweden rated the northern half as less desirable. He suggested that this may be explained by: the long history of out-migration from northern Sweden; the fact that the large cities are all found in the South; and the fact that the southern coast has famous summer vacation areas. According to Gould, this may also explain the disparate travel patterns.

Gould's study illustrates the links between place of residence, place desirability and travel patterns. However, his and similar studies do not examine the historical and continuous representations of different places and people in Sweden or how representations of places and people are reproduced through shifting discursive networks and practices.

According to van Dijk (2001:303), the production and reception of discourse together form "the means of the 'symbolic' reproduction of dominance". This chapter focuses on both production and reception; how representations contribute to the reproduction of power relations, and what consequences this has in the minds of the recipients. The aim of this chapter is to analyze narratives of experiences of moving within Sweden; people's sense of belonging and regional affiliation, and how identities are constructed through their mobility; and perhaps most importantly, the significance of space in the process of subject formation, specific identities available to individuals.

Identities are narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are and, importantly, who they are not. Identities are produced through gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality and attachments to different places. The identity narratives shift and change, are contested and multiple. Not all these narratives are about belonging to particular groupings or collectives; They can be about individual attributes, for instance, but also often relate to a person's own and/or others' perceptions of what belonging to such a grouping or collectivity might imply. Thus, identity narratives are individual or

collective, the latter often serving as a resource for the former (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Race, gender, class and sexuality are spatial projects. These categories are constructed through space, just as space is constructed through race, gender, class and sexuality. As spatial projects, the co-production of these categories and space is never uncontested, and thus the spatiality of ethnicity, gender, class and sexuality often needs ordering and policing. In this analysis I intend to examine the intersection of class, ethnicity and gender, as well as the role space and mobility play in subject formation. I highlight the intersection of multiple identities and the significance of space in the processes of subject formation.

For attempts to understand how representations are received, reworked and resisted by people in their everyday lives, the informal interview is an appropriate method. Another argument for conducting interviews lies in the desire to acknowledge individuals as active subjects; to listen to a range of different voices, to acknowledge people's situated knowledge, views, understanding, interpretations and experiences as important to the construction of 'social reality'. The strength in interviews lies in the recognition of intersubjectivity, which allows for a more in-depth understanding of people and their narratives. Every narrative is deeply situated and has something to say in its own right. My interpretations of the narratives are situated in the same way. Put in a wider social, political and economic context, these subjective utterances may contrast or confirm already established representations and discourses (Rose, 1997). This analysis is by no means a way to say how thing are; We can never be 'objective' in the 'scientific' sense, as Haraway (1988:583) argues: "only partial perspective promises objective vision". Thus, she further states, if we acknowledge our limited location and situated knowledge (and ignorance) we become "answerable for what we learn how to see"; Objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment, of 'particular ways of seeing'.

The empirical material consists of seven tape-recorded in-depth interviews, which lasted 30 minutes to over two hours. I have chosen to interview across specific ranges of difference and sameness, and informants have been chosen based on their experiences of migration and of northern Sweden. All interviewees have a relation to the largest city in Norrland, Umeå, having either lived there in the past or currently living there. Hence, four of the respondents live in Umeå, two live in Stockholm, and one alternates between Umeå and a small town in Norrbotten. Two of the respondents are from the county of Skåne in the very south of Sweden, one is from Stockholm, one is from a small town in Norrbotten, two are from small villages in the inland of Väs-

terbotten, and one is from a small village in the inland of Västernorrland. All respondents have moved around in Sweden and have experienced living in both large cities and small villages. Four are women, three are men. They are all in their early thirties or late twenties; Five of them have a university degree or are university students, and can be seen as belonging to the middle-class One of the informants has children, and two live together with a partner.

I came into contact with the interviewees through acquaintances and the method of snowballing: I asked informants if they could provide me with any contacts who matched my criteria of migration and experience of northern Sweden. The interviews began with me asking the interviewees to narrate their migration pattern from the day they were born to the present day. This was helpful in that they also reflected on their multiple identities and experiences of different places as well as their motives for moving and staying.

Norrland and the representations of Norrland are more important to some of my informants than others. Consequently, the ways the informants use place as part of their identity constructions also differ. Knowledge is situated and embodied, and the respondents carry their own unique stories and experiences (Haraway, 1988). Research on internal migration by Lawson (1999) suggests that the narratives of migrants may contradict hegemonic discourse in society by offering alternative understandings and experiences of migration. She argues that "migrant identities are constructed in both origins and destinations and through the process of mobility itself" (Lawson, 1999:267).

Narratives, or life stories, are often constructed in order to create continuity and to cope with the complex situations in life (Riessman, 1993). The life story constructed during an interview is a life story version among many others; The narratives are always situated and socially constructed, requiring the interviewer to reflect on their making, presentation and use. The purpose of the interview and the purpose of the interviewee have an effect on the narrative, as well as the hierarchical relationship between the researcher, 'the others' and/or the interviewees. The interviews had the character of conversation, with the authority hovering between me and the informant, but with the informant being given a great deal of freedom to direct the conversation toward issues important to him/her, sometimes issues I initially did not regard as important. Thus, the result of the interviews and the focus of the analysis are very different from what I first anticipated.

The interviews were open-hearted, perhaps because the informants were my age and the majority of them have experienced being students, in which cases they understood they were doing a fellow student a favor. Since I never

questioned their narratives, the interview became a situation in which my informants could have their ideas confirmed, but they also sometimes started to question their own arguments. Even so, in the end I control the interview material; Thus it is important to underscore that my and the informants' narratives are contextual. Also, research is ideological and needs to be discussed and questioned. There exist too-pure facts, I cannot make neutral observations and there is no truth to unveil. To produce knowledge is to chose, order and organize the meaning of things, and to suggest a possible reading of a text or a possible reading of a narrative. I cannot argue without a precognition, but I can try to problematize my position and my own knowledge production (see Chapter 2).

## 7.1 Regional resistance

Issues relating to Norrland always engage people and are rarely absent from public debates and discussion forums. Hence, Norrland and the representations of Norrland are more important to some than to others; The degree of engagement among people varies, and the resistance may be highly formalized as in the cases of the "Republic of Jämtland" (see Hansen 1998:182) and 'Kiruna partiet', but the ways people resist and rework identities and representations can also be seen as an everyday embodied practice (Pred, 2004). Regions can be seen as imaginary communities (Anderson, 1983), any production of boundaries, of a defined group, that includes some people – real or not – and excludes others is an act of active and situated imagination. Norrland is an elusive concept and, similar to the nation, is constructed and dependent on imaginations of a homogenous population with common traits, history and goals.

Lisa is a left-wing activist who organizes meetings, seminars and protest rallies around Sweden, and also occasionally writes satirical comic strips. Lisa comes from a small rural community in the inland of Västernorrland. While growing up she always wanted to move south and to a city, and no sooner said than done: After high school she moved to Göteborg, the second largest city in Sweden.

While living in Göteborg Lisa suddenly became very conscious of her 'Norrland identity'. She felt out of place, but made an effort to fit in. This experience of not belonging may construct a longing to belong to a place that is safe, to feel at home (Pred, 2000). Also, identities become clear to us when they clash with others.

> "...when I moved to Göteborg I felt so very wrong too, if I'd bought clothes like theirs I had the wrong shoes and hairstyle or something

anyway, I didn't pay attention to celebrities and stuff like that, I was really a hillbilly…"

*"…när jag flyttade till Göteborg kände jag mig så himla fel också, hade jag köpt likadana kläder som dom hade jag ändå fel skor och frisyr eller något att jag inte hängde med på kändisar och dom saker, jag var verkligen en lantis alltså…"*

"I'd never spoken with the Kramfors dialect before I moved to Göteborg…it was like I felt a much, much stronger identification with Nyland, where I'm from, but also the whole of Norrland which I've never felt before, I've never felt like I belonged in my hometown or anything but have instead always wanted to move south to a city…but when I'd done it, it turned out pretty bad. I only lived in Göteborg for a year."

*"Kramforsdialekten har jag aldrig pratat förrän jag flyttade till Göteborg … det var som att jag kände mycket, mycket starkare identitet till Nyland där jag kommer ifrån men också hela Norrland det som jag aldrig känt innan, jag har aldrig känt att jag hört hemma i min bygd eller nåt sånt utan alltid velat flytta söderut till en stad… men när jag väl gjorde det blev det ganska fel. Jag bodde i Göteborg ett år bara."*

Lisa's identity narratives reflect her desire to belong. The construction of identity is about being and becoming but also, as Yuval-Davis puts it, "belonging and longing to belong" (Yuval-Davis 2006:202). Not all belongings are as important to people in the same way or to the same extent. Emotions and perceptions shift in different times and situations, and are more or less insightful. Scholars such as Katz (2007) and Yuval-Davis (2006) argue that the emotional components of people's constructions of themselves and their identities become more central the more threatened and less secure they feel.

Insecurity may result in forms of resistance or reluctance, for instance the stereotypes of Norrland being contrasted with stereotypes of Stockholm. Entire cities, regions and even nations may become symbols for feelings of alienation and failure. Protesting against generalizations and stereotypes about Norrland, Lisa gives examples from her own life that challenge the stereotypes. For Lisa the Norrland stereotypes typically concern homophobia, sexism, racism and narrow-mindedness. Her narrative supports feminism and anti-racism, and consequently she strongly opposes the notion of the places she belongs to as macho or racist.

> "Yeah but also this, that it's supposed to be hard to come out as homosexual in the country…it's a little like 'Muslims beat their women', sort of like people generalize like crazy, they don't even check if it's true. I don't want to generalize but when I came out as bisexual in Abisko it was no problem…"
>
> *"Ja men också just det där med att det ska vara svårt att komma ut som homosexuell i glesbygden…det är lite som att "muslimerna slår sina kvinnor" så där lite så att man generaliserar otroligt, man kollar inte ens upp om det är sant. Jag vill inte generalisera men när jag kom ut som bisexuell i Abisko var det inga problem…"*

Lisa develops strategies for handling what she experiences as a city norm, one strategy being an act that turns the perspectives upside down and constructs the city and city life as unattractive, as the other, the different and the exception (see Jansson, 2004).

> "My relative who lives in Gällivare…she'd been in Stockholm with a friend and people had been 'totally unnatural' there, they didn't look at each other there, they stared straight ahead or at the ground, she'd tried to say hello to people and sort of catch their eye but it didn't work, she'd been so very uncomfortable there, she said 'They're just so unnatural' over and over – and I think that's the best story ever!"
>
> *"Min släkting som bor i Gällivare…hon hade varit i Stockholm med en vän och folk hade varit 'helt onaturliga' där, de tittade inte på varandra där, de tittade rakt fram eller ner i backen, hon hade försökt heja på folk och möta folks blick sådär men det hade inte gått, hon hade varit så himla obekväm där, hon sa 'dom är ju så onaturliga' flera gånger – och jag tycker det är den bästa historien ever!"*

As discussed in Chapter 4, popular culture such as film can reproduce stereotypes, and these have material effects. Lisa expresses her indignation over a prize-winning movie about rural Dalarna, a county bordering the counties of Gävleborg and Jämtland. Dalarna is not part of Norrland, yet shares many of the characteristics of the Norrland counties. What upsets Lisa is how the movie reproduces the city norm.

> "Also this thing with all the movies, yeah it's always the city dweller and homecomer coming back, it's to an extreme degree that person's eyes you see through…I don't know how many arguments I've had over the film *Dalecarlians* with people from Stockholm and various other people, but I've really tried: 'Don't you see what the norm is

here, whose perspective we're taking, don't you see like that they're stupid and don't understand what data is', and they haven't realized that but instead have gotten angry with me: 'That's just how it is'. I feel like I was sad after seeing it, *Dalecarlians* is supposed to be a funny movie."

*"Också det här med alla filmer, ja men det är alltid storstadsbon och hemvändaren kommer tillbaka, det är extremt mycket den personens ögon man ser med…jag vet inte hur många bråk jag haft om filmen Masjävlar med stockholmare och annat löst folk, men jag har verkligen försökt 'ser ni inte vad som är normen här, vems perspektiv vi tar, ser ni inte typ att dom är dumma och inte ser vad data är eller' liksom dom har inte sett det utan blivit arg på mig 'det är ju så det är'. Jag känner att jag blev ledsen nästan efter jag såg den, Masjävlar ska vara en rolig film."*

Social divisions such as gender, ethnicity, sexuality, class and age tend to shape most people's lives in many social locations. Lisa is well informed when it comes to issues of power and expressions of racism and sexism, but also acknowledges that geography is inflicted by power relations. Her identity narrative shows that the Norrland/Stockholm and the urban/rural divisions are also important in constructing her specific positionings. Divisions such as this may affect some people, to the same extent as the social divisions mentioned above. For those who are affected these spatial divisions are crucial, and making them visible needs to be an important political project. Particularly important is to recognize power relations, which often have their roots in history. Because, as Massey (2005:192) puts it, "Identities are relational in ways that are *spatio*-temporal. They are indeed bound up with the narratives of the past":

"I've also experienced this oppression very clearly directed at me as well as my parents, I've been an active feminist for many years, but I've experienced the regional oppression to be just as present and painful as the patriarchic oppression…the patriarchy has been sort of easy to talk about, people know exactly what you mean, people are really informed about it, but very seldom do I find a forum to talk about the regional oppression…when I say it people usually see it as some funny detail or they see it sort of like a joke, I don't know, it might be now that I don't have the nerve to say it seriously…so I figure it'll become a much greater oppression…an oppression that's like not even allowed to exist that you can't even talk about with your left-leaning friends who know power like the back of their hand…my anarchist

friend from Kiruna understands it about as much as Peter at the Railway Administration in Abisko…"

*"Jag har upplevt det här förtrycket väldigt tydligt också å mina egna vägar och mina förfäders vägnar, jag har varit feministiskt engagerad i flera år, men jag har upplevt det regionala förtrycket lika närvarande och smärtsamt som det patriarkala förtrycket…patriarkatet har varit lätt att prata om liksom, folk vet precis vad man menar, folk är upplysta på det verkligen, men väldigt sällan hittar jag forum för att tala om det regionala förtrycket … när jag säger det ser folk oftast det som någon lustig detalj eller man ser det som ett skämt liksom, jag vet inte, det kanske till och med blir att jag inte vågar säga det på allvar…så tänker jag att det blir ett mycket större förtryck…ett förtryck som inte ens får finnas liksom som man inte ens kan prata om med sina vänsterkompisar som kan makt på sina fem fingrar… min anarkistvän från Kiruna förstår det lika bra som Peter på Banverket i Abisko…"*

"…in southern Sweden I've often felt uncomfortable and afterwards have realized that it was because I'm actually lower in status than they are and they don't see it, I can see myself as a member of the working class associating with the middle class and I experience that they…don't see your subordination but make references to lower classes."

*"…jag har ofta i södra Sverige känt mig obekväm och att jag i efterhand insett att det var för att jag faktiskt är lägre i status än dom och att dom inte ser det, jag kan tänka mig som en arbetarklass som umgås med medelklass personer och upplever att dom … inte ser ens underordning men spelar på den…"*

Issues of class are important to Lisa, who makes an interesting point by asking if it is possible to be middle class in the glesbygd. In some instances, belonging to a place and the construction of a collective identity based on place may play down other differences such as class and ethnicity, since the meaning relating to the center periphery distinction may form a basic foundation for other constructions. This basic foundation may be hard to deconstruct even though the material that constitutes this construction may vary (Paulgaard, 2008). When trying to understand differences, Lisa describes a rural/urban divide but also a divide between people in Norrland and people from "the South". What she describes could be rendered as an unequal accessibility to national networks, memberships, influence and support as well as attributes that give status in society. In the terms of Bourdieu (1972), even

if people do not lack economic capital they may lack social and cultural capital, and the access to different forms of symbolic capital may differ between places in Sweden. Power is inscribed in space, and unequal access to different forms of symbolic capital is one way to reproduce identity and difference.

Following Lawson (1999) and Paulgaard (2008), rural places are less central to the construction of the *modern* nation. This has consequences on mobility, and these representations define what is considered the modern and the outdated. We live in an interconnected world with information technologies, increased mobility and a consumer society, which are blamed for accelerating the erosion of place (Thift, 1996). Yet, boundaries are being constructed that separate 'us' from 'them' (Paulgaard, 2008), and the 'global' always has a local expression (Massey, 2005).

> "This is something I discovered just within the last few years, the friends I hang around with now, very few of them are from the country, they can be from northern or southern Sweden, but of the ones I hang around with most are from cities so it took a pretty long time before I understood, I felt so very stupid for not following such things and I couldn't associate it with gender or education or anything like that, but after a while I realized that a lot of it had to do with the fact that I come from a little place, a small community. When they talk about subcultures of the 90s I'm completely lost, there are no subcultures in Nyland, people were on the indoor hockey team or the football team, and when people talk about different clothing styles and music styles and different concerts they've seen, I went to like one concert the whole time I was in junior high and high school, and that was Dia Psalma, they came to Kramfors."

> *"Det här är något jag upptäckt bara de sista åren, dom vänner jag umgås med nu, väldigt få kommer från glesbygden, dom kan komma från norra eller södra Sverige, men av de jag umgås med kommer de flesta från städer så det tog ganska lång tid innan jag fattade, jag kände mig så himla dum att jag inte hängde med på sånna saker att jag inte kunde förknippa det med kön eller utbildning eller nåt sånt, utan efter ett tag insåg jag att det var så mycket som handlade om att jag kommer från ett litet ställe ett litet samhälle. När dom pratar om subkulturer på 90-talet har jag noll koll, det fanns inga subkulturer i Nyland, folk var med i innebandylaget eller fotbollslaget, och så när folk pratar om olika klädstilar och musikstilar och olika spelningar de var på så, jag var liksom på en spelning hela högstadiet och gymnasiet och det var Dia Psalma, dom kom till Kramfors."*

The newly founded local political party Norrlandspartiet has engaged famous spokespersons from Norrland, and as a rule these people live in Stockholm (and sometimes in Monaco). This is also often true for authors who have made their careers portraying Norrland (Öhman, 2001). Lisa similarly offers her criticism, and particularly her defense of the glesbygd, a bit from afar. She does not reside permanently in Abisko, but instead by and large lives in the city of Umeå and frequently travels to other cities. Some scholars and authors argue that it is necessary to leave a place in order to put place and experiences into perspective. Writers in the Diaspora such as P.O. Enquist and Torgny Lindgren, despite of their absence, have played important roles in Norrland political identity projects (Öhman, 2001). Lisa uses irony in sketching and writing a comic strip, where places are used to emphasize things she regards as important in ways that unveil power relations. Actively identifying with a marginalized region, Lisa is simultaneously resisting the identities produced in the power centers, for instance the way people in the cities are expected to struggle to become well paid employees. Lisa works for non-profit organizations and networks, and only sporadically as a wage-worker. Her narrative can be seen as a way of resisting the hegemonic understanding of youth migration and the notion of the city as the future and progress and the rural as traditional and obsolete.

Figure 17: "Yeah, that's right, they asked what it was like to live in Norrland. I told them it was like making a sex change. A small detail that changes your whole lifestyle"
Comic strip by Lisa. With permission.

## 7.2 The move to the city

Stories of youth moving from small villages to large cities are frequently reproduced in research, popular culture and the news media. One might get the impression that people move from one place to another without hesitation. This is far from true; When it comes to changing their place of residence, people are in fact very immobile even in 'modern', 'Western' and urban contexts. Swedish research shows that the propensity to move decreases with the time people have resided at a place; they build their social networks and become increasingly attached to the place. Place is constituted of social

relations and narratives about them (Massey, 2005). Research from Sweden shows that those who move do not represent the average population; The movers are usually young and possess 'transferable skills', which often implies that they are highly educated (Fischer et al., 2000).

The discourse of modernity with mobility as an important trait creates a false impression of people's movement. The cosmopolitans are a negligible minority, and while mobility is linked to the discourse of the global and urban, the discourse of the rural is linked to the local and to immobility.

This discourse and practice of self-evident mobility (Massey, 2005; see Löfgren, 1991; Hansen, 1998 and Svensson, 2006 for a Swedish context) is linked to theories and notions of fluidity and unbounded spaces (Relph, 1976; Thrift, 1996). Different from the view of the relationship between mobility and place theorized by Relph and Thrift, Massey (2005) points out that place is bound up in social relations, that place and identity are mutually constituted, and that unimpeded mobility has not happened for everyone in all spheres of activity. Paulgaard (2008) shows that even though present mobility in some aspects seems to reduce the local, regional and even national uniqueness of both people and places, place still counts in people's construction of identity. For my interviewees, place becomes very much one with social relations and experiences. Place becomes important for their constructions of identities – their own and others'. Places become part of their identities, and are valued, judged and placed in hierarchies.

The 'urban turn' in geography (e.g. Storper and Venables, 2004; Bathelt et al., 2004) has effectively reproduced how urban and rural areas are valued and judged. The urban turn depicts the urban as clusters of knowledge and innovation that reside 'in the air' or 'buzz' of urban life. The cosmopolitan street life, the urban face-to-face contact, is seen as a driving force in the flow of experiences and knowledge. Furthermore, the successful (urban) place is portrayed as tolerant and cool, attracting talented and creative people (Florida, 2002).

> "Large cities therefore facilitate learning, and are particularly attractive for highly-talented young people who have large potential returns from learning" (Storper and Venables, 2004:352).

The rural is, as mentioned many times in previous chapters, constructed in contrast and in relation to the urban, which for the most part is represented as a site of connection and creativity, inhabited by talented young people. Thus, the rural becomes an unattractive space inhabited by untalented, mainly old and uncreative people. Within this discourse Norrland is repre-

sented as less developed. As Massey (2005) note, this notion not only distinguishes historical periods from each other but is also commonly used to distinguish between geographical areas. The politics of belonging construct boundaries that separate the world population into 'us' and 'them', and include struggles around the determination of what is involved in belonging, in being a member of a community. This reproduces enduring representations of people and places. My informants wish to belong to a social context and a place, at the same time that they make clear the places and social relations to which they do not (want to) belong.

Simon moved from Stockholm to Luleå, and after a couple of years ended up in Umeå where he now studies at the university. He has a somewhat ambivalent attitude toward Norrland. For him, Norrland has become a symbol for what is authentic, profound and tranquil, but is also backward and coarse.

> "We're going to do internships next term…the big scare for people who aren't from around here is ending up in Norrland's inland where they think: where time stands still, nothing happens there, I'm going to sit in my room and not have anything to do and everybody's going to be farmers. Yeah, there are surely lots of preconceptions that influence people's decisions I think, the small community where the anxiety oozes from the walls."
>
> *"Vi ska på praktik nästa termin … stora skräcken för folk som inte är härifrån är att hamna i Norrlands inland där tänker man, där står tiden still, där händer ingenting, jag kommer sitta på min kammare och inte ha något att göra och alla kommer vara bönder. Ja det finns nog väldigt mycket fördomar som avgör tror jag, det lilla samhället där ångesten dryper på väggarna."*

Simon articulates a well established discourse on sparsely populated areas and small villages within Sweden. Small (peripheral) villages are represented as unattractive for cultural and educated people with ambitions and modern lifestyles. Spending time in a small village as described above would, according to Simon, make his fellow students feel restless and alienated.

The notion of Lappsjuka[57] is used in a humoristic manner in everyday conversation; It is a word used for many different purposes, but always to exemplify some kind of isolation (Schough, 2008). According to the Swedish National Encyclopedia, it is a "common term for the condition of depression

[57] *Lappsjuka* refers to the province of Lappland; the Swedish word for Sámi used to be *Lapp*. *Lapp* is sometimes used as an invective.

caused by abiding in a secluded place. Lappsjuka was previously thought to especially afflict people who had moved to Lappland" (Nationalencyklopedin, author's translation). Schough (2008) shows how Lappsjuka became an acknowledged medical condition among colonizers and explorers in the beginning of the 1900s, and that spending time in the Swedish North was viewed as difficult for a civilized person. As pointed out by Schough (2008), different cultures, social classes and gender positions allow for different descriptions of pain and suffering (see Johannisson, 1997). The agony of Simon's fellow students when imagining the small village is well established within the popular discourse of sparsely populated areas and their populations.

Simon likes it in Umeå, although it happens that people give him a hard time because of his Stockholm origin. He believes the prejudice is a result of the position of Norrland as an underdog, and draws from history and collective identities to make sense of the power relations and representations:

> "...yeah, it's mostly these cliché-like prejudices that Stockholmers are self-assured, usually moderates, they come in and try to run the show...I think that has its roots in Norrland being like Great Britain's Scotland, Norrland was after all suppressed, Norrland got to build the Inland Railway at the same time as Norrland was our great economic resource, I don't know, I guess it's still there on both sides, the fascination of the big city while you simultaneously have quite a lot of preconceptions that Stockholmers grab up everything for themselves and are self-righteous."
>
> *"... ja det är mest dom här klyshiga fördomarna om att stockholmare dom är självsäkra, gärna moderater, dom kommer och styr och ställer...det tror jag har sina rötter i att Norrland är som Storbritanniens Skottland, Norrland var ju kuvat, Norrland fick bygga inlandsbanan samtidigt som Norrland var vår stora ekonomiska tillgång, jag vet inte, jag gissar att det ligger kvar på båda sidor, fascinationen av storstan samtidigt som man har ganska mycket fördomar att stockholmare roffar åt sig och är självgoda."*

The informants who come from small villages in Norrland have grown up in places where there have been major changes within just a couple of generations. Their grandparents and perhaps even their parents were able to work and lead normal lives in the small community, whereas my informants would have difficulty finding jobs and what they would regard as necessary amenities. When talking about moving back to their small home village, my interviewers are hesitant. The future of the inland of Norrland is viewed as

particularly uncertain. Hanna moved from a small village in the inland of Västerbotten to Stockholm in order to work and get training to become a beautician, and is ambivalent when discussing the rural Norrland and the urban.

> "...there were a whole lot of kids there when I was growing up so it was a different community, now nobody moves in there, but of course there are kids there but people don't move in there, it's a little tragic when you yourself feel like you had a really nice community to grow up in, but they're cutting down on everything, the same things aren't available there now."

> *"...det var jättemycket barn där när jag växte upp så var ett annat samhälle, nu är det ingen som flyttar in dit, men visst finns det barn där men man flyttar inte in dit, det är lite tragiskt när man själv känner att man hade ett jättefint samhälle att växa upp i, men de drar ju in på allt, det finns inte samma utbud där nu."*

> "...I guess I would say it's too small, okay if it were 30, 40 kilometers from Umeå, or 20 kilometers from some other little town, but now it's so far away from everything."

> *"...jag skulle nog säga att det är för litet, okej om det låg några mil från Umeå , eller två mil från någon annan liten stad men nu ligger det så långt bort från allt."*

Rebecka is also from a small village in the inland of Västerbotten, is a journalist, and has worked at many local newsrooms in Västerbotten and Norrbotten. Erik moved from a small town in Norrbotten to Umeå to study, and moved to Stockholm after graduating. For Rebecka and Erik as well as Hanna, it seems unproblematic and 'natural' to move from smaller towns in northern Sweden to larger cities in the South. Most of their friends have moved in a similar manner, and their motives seem to be straightforward. Lotta Svensson (2006) writes about why Swedish youth living in small villages move or stay, arguing that they wish to make the 'natural' choice, and what is natural and normal is connected to class and gender. What is regarded as the natural choice for middle-class youth is to "'naturally' orient towards the urban and the modern" (Svensson, 2006: 184). The working-class youth in Svensson's study seem to live according to the idea that it is natural that there are job opportunities nearby and that one should be able to stay (see also Löfgren, 1991).

All my informants but one have made the typical journey, from a small city or a small village to one of the three largest cities in Sweden, or to a larger city abroad. Yet some of them have also made more unusual resettlements, such as moving from large cities to small ones, or from the South to the North. With these moves they feel, to a greater extent than do those who have made 'typical' moves, that they have to explain their motives to friends, family and others. Consequently, places become important in constructing the character and identity they seek to communicate; Whether they move and where they move become crucial to their identity narratives. The responses from others have fundamental meaning for the individual potential to create oneself in terms of uniqueness or identity; The other is crucial to the construction, performance, reworkings and enactment of identity (Massey, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006). As Simon puts it:

> "...but why Umeå, Luleå? Why did you do it? People mostly thought it was strange, why it can't be something fun...What do you do up there? Why didn't you take off for Göteborg or Malmö? People associate it, a bit prejudiced, with it being farmlike, surely nothing exciting could happen there, surely there's nothing to do, sort of."

> "...men varför Umeå, Luleå? Varför gjorde du det? Folk tyckte det mest var konstigt, varför det kan ju inte vara något roligt... vad gör du där uppe? Varför stack du inte till Göteborg eller Malmö? Man förknippar det lite fördomsfullt med att det är bondigt, där kan det väl inte hända något spännande, det finns väl inget att göra liksom."

Maria moved from Lund in Skåne to a small rural village in the South of Sweden while still in high school.

> "...yeah, I guess it was that a lot of my friends didn't really understand why, thought it was a little strange and that I wanted to be a little special and do something different, and why weren't Katedralskolan and all the other things good enough, yeah there was a certain amount of resistance involved in explaining why I didn't just go with the flow..."

> *"... ja det var väl det att många kompisar inte riktigt förstod varför, tyckte att det var lite märkligt och att jag skulle vara lite märkvärdig göra något annorlunda, och varför dög inte katedralskolan och allt vad dom hette, ja det var ett visst motstånd det här att förklara varför jag inte följde strömmen..."*

Some actions are seen as natural and are never questioned, while other actions need explanation. Identities and actions are affirmed by people who act

in similar ways; Hegemonic discourses may be challenged by those who act very differently and question actions that are taken for granted.

Being different may also become an appreciated part of a person's identity. Even though Umeå hosts students from all parts of Sweden, Maria and Simon feel they have become a bit more interesting and different in Norrland. Simon describes how he gets more attention and appreciation because of his representations of his hometown, Stockholm. Similarly, Hanna was worried about moving (back) to Umeå (Norrland) and becoming one of many people there who had grown up in the inland areas of Norrland. She had felt less anonymous and more recognized in Stockholm:

> "...I felt: Am I going to just be one of many in Umeå with everybody who already lives there. When I lived in Stockholm I felt more like, I felt less anonymous in Stockholm...there I was more recognized because I was from here."
>
> *"... jag kände; ska jag bli bara en i mängden i Umeå av allihopa som redan bor där. När jag bodde i Stockholm kände jag mig mer som, jag kände mig mindre anonym i Stockholm ... där var man mer igenkänd för att jag var härifrån."*

Migration becomes an important part of many people's identity, and migration within Sweden may be a means to change context. A person from 'out of town' may be viewed as more exciting and interesting than someone with a background similar to that of everyone else. However, research on cultural racism within Sweden (e.g. Tesfahuney, 1998) shows that far from all migrants are viewed as different in a positive sense; Representations of 'ethnicity' and 'culture' are important.

## 7.3 To move or stay

We have discussed mobility – how mobility and the urban are linked to ideals of progress and modernity. To a greater extent than ever before, young people are expected to travel in order to study and gain experience and language skills. Of course, not everyone wants to study and not everyone wishes to travel. What is more, most people stay put (Malmberg, 2002). My interviewees are different in this respect: For them, mobility has become part of their identities, and their identities are constructed in relation to (among other things) those who do not move. Simon expresses:

> "It's surely not only northern Sweden but also the small community...where the development hasn't gone as far...you hear the most from

people who've moved from there to Stockholm, who felt their hometown had been too little and claustrophobic, it could very well be that many of the people who've moved to Stockholm didn't feel like they fit in, there are clear rules for how you should be in smaller towns, in Stockholm there are different alternatives and subgroups, in smaller communities there aren't as many alternatives…"

*"Det gäller nog inte bara norra Sverige utan också det lilla samhället … där utvecklingen inte har gått lika långt fram … man hör mest av folk som flyttat därifrån till Stockholm som tyckt att sin hemstad varit för liten och instängd, kan ju vara så att många som flyttat till Stockholm inte känt att dom passade in det finns ju tydliga regler för hur man ska vara i mindre stad, i Stockholm finns olika alternativ och subgrupper, i mindre samhällen finns inte lika många alternativ …"*

Those who stay put are sometimes described as enviable, as they are free from restlessness. My informants discuss migration as a means to achieving happiness and completeness. Both Hanna and Maria say they sometimes wish they could feel more satisfied with things as they are. Hanna says:

"I can admire people who stay and live in their hometown and are happy with that and thrive there, because I can admire those types of people just because they're so calm and don't need that much to be happy while others run around their whole lives and move and aren't happy anyway…it has to do with what kind of calm you yourself have within you and what you need to be happy, what I need to be happy doesn't have to be the same thing, I don't have to achieve this endless number of things to feel happy, that's surely the whole point."

*"Jag kan ju beundra dom som stannar och bor på sin hemort och är nöjd med det och trivs med det för att sånna personer kan jag beundra just för dom är så lugna och behöver inte så mycket för att va nöjda medan andra jagar runt hela livet och flyttar och ändå inte är nöjda … det har att göra med vad du själv har för lugn i dig och vad du behöver för att vara lycklig det jag behöver för att var lycklig behöver inte vara samma sak, jag behöver inte uppnå de här sjuttioelva grejerna för att känna mig nöjd det är väl det som är själva grejen."*

However, those who stay put are more often described as lacking in initiative and narrow-minded. The informants from smaller cities and villages describe the fear of getting stuck in one place, and associate this 'getting stuck'

as not becoming someone or something, as not developing one's full potential. Those who stay are to a great extent constructed as lacking many of the attributes and characteristics the interviewees seek and value, such as adaptability and the motivation to develop and progress (cf. Svensson, 2006 and Löfgren, 1991). Moving includes both push and pull factors; People not only move *to* something but also move *from* something. The latter factor seems to be just as important, even for those who move from large cities to smaller ones. Places are bound up in social relations; People move not only to and from *places* but also to and from *social relations*. It is evident that specific places, similar to specific social relations, come to represent belonging, alienation, safety, failure and success, and so on. As Maria expressed it:

> "I felt like the people who'd stayed in Lund, it felt like I'd outgrown them so very much and saw things in a certain way I thought well I can't stay here when they're still going around doing the same things and thinking the same way and having the same friends and so then I guess I tried to find a place where the people were more open-minded."Hanna moved from Lycksele to Stockholm:
>
> *"Jag tyckte att de som var kvar i Lund det kändes som jag vuxit om dom så väldigt mycket och såg saker på ett sätt jag tänkte jag kan ju inte vara kvar här när dom fortfarande går omkring i samma banor och tänker likadant och har samma kompisar och så då försökte jag väl hitta som där människorna som var mer öppensinniga."*
>
> "Well I wanted to get an education, I wanted to see something else, felt like life would've been marked out in Lycksele if I'd stayed in the relationship I was in then, felt like I knew exactly what was going to happen, I just had to get away from everything."
>
> *"Jag ville ju utbilda mig, jag ville se något annat, kände att livet var utstakat i Lycksele om jag stannat kvar i det förhållande jag var i då, kände att jag visste precis vad som skulle hända, jag behövde bara bort från alltihop."*

Simon:

> "...maybe you should say that it's not at all about Stockholm but instead my relationship with my parents because they're the ones who place the demands. But the way I feel I think anyway that there are more demands in Stockholm, I also feel it when I see some program on Stockholm and it's the inner city and Stureplan and it's like that,

that you have to be right all the time, then I can feel like it's so nice that I don't live there."

*"... kanske man skulle säga att det inte alls handlar om Stockholm utan min relation till mina föräldrar eftersom det är dom som ställer kraven. Men som det känns för mig tycker jag ändå att det finns fler krav i Stockholm, det känner jag också när jag ser något program om Stockholm och det är innerstan och Stureplan och det är så där att man ska vara rätt hela tiden, så kan jag känna att så skönt att jag inte bor där."*

Robert moved from a small community in Skåne to Umeå:

"...it was because I was accepted (at university), I was accepted in Lund too, but I didn't want to go there, I just associated Lund with failure."

*"... det var för att jag kom in här (universitetsutbildning), jag kom in i Lund också, men jag ville inte dit, jag bara förknippade Lund med att misslyckas."*

Mobility implies encounters with difference and otherness, something that is important to the perception of one's self as distinctive in personal, social and cultural terms. Differences within a place or region are played down, since differences between regions or places are constructed as even more distinctive. In the informants' narratives the power relations between the North and the South and the rural and urban are evident, however for Maria and Simon, who moved from larger cities in the South, the 'differences' in the North are not always regarded as negative. Their narratives rework the discourse of the 'city as progress'; They instead describe the life in their hometowns as alienating, shallow and demanding in contrast to Norrland and Umeå, where they feel affinity and safety.

Simon:

"I can't let it go that in Stockholm it's more important what you do when you meet somebody at a bar, and you should preferably work in media or have started a media company or something like that, maybe it's a little prejudiced of me, but it's partly my experience...if I'm honest, it feels a little like a plus to be from Stockholm, that people in the end think it's a little exciting. Even though I don't see myself as a Stockholmer anymore, I don't know what I see myself as."

*”Jag kan inte släppa det att det i Stockholm spelar större roll vad du gör när du träffar någon på krogen, och man ska gärna hålla på med media eller ha startat upp något mediaföretag eller något sådant, det kanske är lite fördomsfullt av mig, men det är delvis min erfarenhet … om jag ska vara ärlig så känns det lite som ett plus att man kommer från Stockholm, att folk I slutändan tycker det är lite spännande. Även om jag inte ser mig själv som Stockholmare längre, jag vet inte vad jag ser mig som.”*

Maria:

“Maybe I’m a little affected from when I was up in Kiruna and opened the paper, that it was so nice to open the paper and it was about little Greta, seven, who’d gotten a new bike, and a bear somebody’d seen and like Wow what a problem-free society it’s fantastic, whereas in *Syndsvenskan* you read about a man who’s shot somebody else on the street in Malmö…”

*”Jag är kanske lite påverkat av när jag var uppe i Kiruna och man öppnade tidningen att det var så skönt att öppna tidningen och så handlade om lilla Greta 7 år som fått en ny cykel och en björn som nån sett och liksom och bara wow vilket problemfritt samhälle det är fantastiskt, medans i sydsvenskan står det om en man som skjutit en annan på öppen gata i Malmö… ”*

Simon:

“Sometimes it felt like I could be stabbed to death on the subway, nothing would happen, people would keep staring out through the window, I guess that’s how I’ve always felt in Stockholm. I actually don’t know why that is, and there I think there’s a difference in Norrland it’s some form of, it’s more down-to-earth…people who told me – we don’t lock the door – I haven’t locked the door since I’ve lived in Luleå…Maybe I’m glorifying it a little, exaggerating, but I think there’s some kind of community feeling here.”

*”Det kändes ibland som att jag skulle kunna bli ihjälstucken på tunnelbanan, inget skulle hända, folk skulle fortsätta stirra ut genom fönstret det har jag nog alltid känt i Stockholm. Jag vet inte vad det beror på faktiskt och där tycker jag det är skillnad i Norrland det är någon form av, det är mer jordnära … folk som berättade – vi låser inte dörren - jag har inte låst dörren sedan jag bor i Luleå … jag*

*kanske glorifierar lite, överdriver, men jag tycker det finns någon slags gemenskapskänsla här."*

Even though many of the narratives illustrate the peripheral and marginalized position of the North and rural areas, being from the North not always experienced by the informants as a bad thing. Identities are not fixed or stable, and place of origin and belonging can be altered, emphasized or downplayed depending on context and situation or on how social positions and different identities are valued and judged. Furthermore, (stereotypical) representations of Norrland and the people living there may appear beneficial in some contexts and are reproduced by the informants.

Hanna:

"I think it had to do with me being from Norrland that I got the job at *Din Sko*...when I got there she was so positive 'I've heard so many good things about Norrland'."

*"Jag tror det hade att göra med att jag var från Norrland att jag fick jobbet på Din Sko ... när jag kom dit var hon så positiv "jag har hört så mycket gott om Norrland."*

Me:

"What was it they thought was so positive?"

*"Vad var det som de tyckte var så positivt?"*

Hanna:

"Well, loyal and willing to work and yeah you know all that, yeah I don't know if that was why, but I don't think it's been to my disadvantage when looking for either a school or a job..."Erik has only experienced advantages of being from Norrland:

*"Ja, lojal och arbetsvillig och ja du vet allt det, ja inte vet jag om det var därför, men alltså jag tror inte det varit till min nackdel varken när jag sökte skola eller jobb..."*

Erik:

"I can say I've had certain advantages as a Norrlandian in the city, above all it's been an enormous advantage to be from Norrland with

second-hand rental apartments. There's some kind of mythical picture here in the city that they're well behaved, with almost all the apartments I've rented second-hand one of the reasons has been that I'm from Norrland. They've said straight out that 'I usually rent to Norrlandians'."

*"Vissa fördelar har jag haft som norrlänning i stan kan jag säga, framförallt med andrahandslägenheter har det varit en enorm fördel att vara från Norrland. Det finns någon mytbild här i stan att dom är skötsamma, nästan alla lägenheter har jag fått i andrahand, en orsak har varit att jag varit från Norrland. Dom har rent ut sagt att 'jag hyr oftast ut åt norrlänningar'"*

Simon:

"In Norrlandians' eyes Stockholmer is something negative, but in Stockholmers' eyes, if you're looking for an apartment and write that you're from Norrland it's a plus in Stockholm, because in Stockholm people associate it with some form of honesty in principle, he's okay, a little like a farmer but damned okay."

*"I norrlänningars ögon så är stockholmare något negativt men I stockholmares ögon alltså, skriver man att man kommer från Norrland och söker lägenhet är det ett plus i Stockholm för att i Stockholm förknippar man det med någon form av ärlighet i princip, han är reko, lite bondig men fan reko."*

"I guess it's about the big city as compared to the small community, and Norrland I guess is still associated with the old Sweden, like it was before, I guess it's also that that's in an opposite way become the positive in these apartment applications, it's the old Swedish People's Home, the integrity we Stockholmers have lost."

*"Jag gissar att det handlar om storstaden vis a vi det lilla samhället och Norrland förknippas väl någonstans fortfarande med det gamla Sverige tror jag, som det var förr, det är väl också det som omvänt blivit det positiva i de här bostadsansökningarna, det är det gamla svenska folkhemmet, hederligheten som vi stockholmare tappat."*

The discourse on Norrland and Norrlandians is similar to the one reproduced in media, as backward and unenterprising. However, the representations of Norrland and Norrlandians as more reliable and genuine are more prominent in the narratives. This may be seen as a parallel discourse on

Norrland and Norrlandians, and as a discourse more likely to be reproduced by Norrlandians themselves.

## 7.4 In a neoliberal context

According to Löfgren (1991) and Svensson (2006), young people are particularly subjected to a norm of mobility and urban living. They are increasingly moving away to study, and the continuing population concentration in Sweden is mainly an effect of student migration (see Lundholm, 2007 for an overview). This corresponds to the migration of my interviewees; All of them have moved in order to study or to receive training. At the same time, they offer many other reasons for why they move. Lundholm (2007) suggest further that socially related motives for migration are becoming more frequent in this time of "post-urbanization".

Theories on new urbanism that argue that people are increasingly moving to places with the best variety of amenities can be linked to a discourse on neoliberalization, with the dominant narrative of the city as progress (Lawson, 1999). These discourses dictate identities (and narratives) to us, but of course the identities created through global economic processes vary, and can be resisted and reworked; Places and people are not simply 'subject' to these processes (Massey, 2004).

Many of the interviewees graduated from high school in the aftermath of the profound recession at the end of the 90s with high levels of unemployment. Since the 90s, Sweden has been increasingly influenced by neoliberal politics, and the goal has been to prioritize low inflation rates rather than low levels of unemployment. Increased pressure is being placed on the labor force, in line with a neoliberal flexibility discourse characterizing many Western economies (Castree et al., 2004; Harvey, 2005). Instead of being offered jobs with long-term employment and a salary negotiated between unions and employers, the workforce is increasingly expected to quickly change working tasks and even employers, and to look for employment at other locations. These demands are not necessarily in line with the wishes of the individual worker (and do not necessarily form the best strategy for all industries (Eriksson, 2009)).

Consequently, at the beginning of the 21st century when many of the informants completed their education and training, young people without work experience struggled to find jobs. Some of my informants moved to larger cities, not only because they believed this might improve their chances but also because their circle of acquaintances moved. As Erik states:

"I knew it was easier (to find a job) in Stockholm than in Umeå, there were hardly any jobs in the register under economy or my fields so it looked pretty gloomy in Umeå when it came to jobs for new graduates, and in Stockholm too actually...I hang out a lot with the people I studied with in Umeå, most of them live here...I think that's also a reason many move down (to Stockholm) among the people I know. I moved here (to Stockholm) because there were so many people I knew who also moved here."

*"Jag visste att det var lättare (att få jobb) i Stockholm än i Umeå, det fanns knappt jobb på platsbanken inom ekonomi eller mina fält så det såg ganska dystert ut i Umeå vad gäller jobb för nyexade, och i Stockholm också i och för sig ... man umgås mycket med dom jag pluggade med i Umeå dom flesta bor här... det tror jag också är en orsak till att många flyttar ner (till Stockholm) bland dom jag känner. Jag flyttade hit (till Stockholm) för att det var så många som jag kände som också flyttade hit."*

"In the beginning it was hard to get started in Stockholm, it's a long starting run. Almost everybody lives in second-hand rental apartments, then the contract ends and you have to move again, a lot of people have a lot of jobs in the beginning because you get hired on a project basis, it took maybe three years before I had a good place to live and a steady job, a lot of people take temporary and project-based jobs till they find something. Last year was the first year I had full vacation time."

*"I början var det jobbigt att komma in i Stockholm, det är en lång startsträcka. Nästan alla bor i andrahandskontrakt, så tar det slut och så får man flytta igen, många har många jobb i början för man får projektanställningar, det tog ju kanske tre år innan man hade en bra bostad och ett fast jobb, många går ju på visstidsanställningar och projektanställningar tills man hittar nåt. Förra året var det första år jag hade full semester."*

Rebecka appreciates the situation on the Stockholm labor market, which she defines as more competitive with greater demands on workers to be adaptable. This demanding and more competitive and flexible climate attracted her to Stockholm, and she now works as a journalist at one of the largest newspapers in Sweden. In her identity narrative, Rebecka reproduces the discourse of the need for flexibility, adaptability and competition among the workforce:

"...you can experience it as a little claustrophobic in smaller towns, that everything is like it's always been and it's very hard to change something. Something I think is an advantage in Stockholm is that there's increased competition in many areas and that makes people more inclined to adapt and redo things."

*"... man kan uppleva det lite instängt på mindre orter att allting är som det alltid har varit och det är väldigt svårt att förändra något. Det jag kan tycka är en fördel med Stockholm är att det är en ökad konkurrens inom många områden och att det gör att man är mer benägen att anpassa sig och göra om."*

What is described by researchers as the knowledge and innovations that reside in 'the air' of urban life is described by Rebecka and Erik as the amenities they rarely visit or utilize but appreciate just because they are there and accessible. The informants who moved to Stockholm describe the life in the large city as more flexible, faster, with a wide range of restaurants, theatres and more.

Both Rebecka and Erik identify with Norrland and are proud of this part of their identity. Rebecka says she becomes more of a Norrlandian in Stockholm and more of a Stockholmer in Umeå, and that she misses Norrland when she is in Stockholm and misses Stockholm while in Umeå visiting friends or while visiting family in her home village. Her identity and sense of belonging end up being a mix of Stockholm and the places she comes from, and she seems to look upon her identity as made and becoming:

"...you're proud of what you come from and don't want to let go of that part and that makes it so you don't completely sort of try to become, remake yourself so to say, go all out for the Stockholmers' new things, you think of yourself a little as someone who's moved there, it's a part of your identity."

*"... man är stolt över det man kommer ifrån och vill inte släppa den biten och det gör att man inte till fullo liksom försöker bli, göra om sig så där, gå in för stockholmarnas nyheter man ser sig lite som inflyttad, det är en del av ens identitet."*

Erik says he is more informed of what is happening in his home region now than when he lived there:

"Today I guess I'm characterized as being from Norrland, when you live down here, you don't need to say exactly where, I guess I feel like a

Norrbottnian, I've become a bit more of a local patriot for some reason..."

*"Idag kännetecknas jag nog att vara från Norrland, när man bor här nere, man behöver inte saga exakt vart, norrbottning känner jag väl som, man har blivit lite mer lokalpatriot av någon anledning ..."*

The narratives of Erik and Rebecka may exemplify that the places people move from do not stop influencing them when they migrate. Rather, the place they move from may become more important in their identity narratives. Their positions as white and middle class contribute to their migration (for instance, the place they move to and the fact that they move at all) and contribute to constructing new identities as successful in-migrants to Stockholm in contrast to, for instance, less powerful and privileged identities such as immigrants and the working class.

Yet, similar to skin color, dialects can become a metonym for something else such as social class, 'culture' or a way of life (hooks, 2009; Pred, 2004). The habitual stereotyping of people and places continues even though the stereotypes or myths may not correspond to people's experiences in their daily lives (see Paulgaard, 2008). The people we meet who do not fit the stereotypes are constructed as exceptions to the rule (see e.g. Pred, 2000). Robert says:

"...I knew somebody who was a Norrlandian but he was really talkative and social so I said: You're not how I imagine a Norrlandian should be, Nah he said, he wasn't. My very oldest friend from Skåne is quite reserved too, it's funny it's everywhere..."

*"... jag kände någon som var norrlänning men han var väldigt pratig och social då sa jag: du är inte vad jag föreställer mig en norrlänning ska vara, nä sa han, det var han inte. Min absolute äldsta vän från Skåne är så där återhållsam också, det är lustigt det finns överallt ..."*

Various social divisions are important in constructing identities. Hence, as mentioned before, there are 'spatial categories' or social positions that in some instances may become important. Again, Robert:

"I'm reminded of it (being from Skåne) quite often and they assign me characteristics, it's just like me assigning them the characteristics of being reserved and quiet..."

*” Jag blir påmind om det (att vara skåning) väldigt ofta och de tillskriver mig egenskaper, det är precis som att jag tillskriver dom att vara tillbakadragna och tysta …”*

According to the informants, and consistent with media representations, the stereotypical Norrlandian is ‘authentic’: quiet, calm, down to earth, sometimes obsolete and sometimes reliant and hardworking. Stereotypes are by definition simplifications and exaggerations of reality; Nevertheless they are reproduced and may, as shown here, have material effects as the discourses on Norrland and other places become part of people’s everyday lives. It is through bodily engagement in locally situated practices, including exposure to mass-media images and narratives, that people knowingly or unknowingly contribute to the social construction of categories that make others different (Pred, 2000).

Hanna: “…a lot of people I’ve met in Stockholm say: Yeah, you’re from Norrland you’re calm and you’re this and that, they think that just because somebody’s from Norrland they’re calm, just like that. Everyone I’ve gotten to know has said that, and I’m a calm person, but everybody thinks it’s because I come from Norrland.”

*Hanna: ” … många jag träffat i Stockholm säger: ja du är från Norrland du är ju lugn och du är si och så, de tror att bara för att man är från Norrland är man lugn, så är det. Alla jag lärt känna har sagt det, och jag är lugn som person, men alla tror att det är för att jag kommer från Norrland.”*

Me: “What do you say?”

*Me: ”Vad säger du då?”*

Hanna: “I don’t say that much, I just laugh because it naturally has to do with how you are as a person, but there’s of course a calm up here that doesn’t exist in Stockholm, but that’s another thing.”

*Hanna: ”Jag säger inte så mycket, jag bara skrattar för det har såklart att göra hur man är som person, men det finns såklart ett lugn här uppe som inte finns i Stockholm, men det är ju en annan sak.”*

“When I lived in Stockholm there were a lot of people who talked about, you remember when *Dalecarlians* came out, you put people in categories, same thing with *The Hunters*, you heard about women who

wrote letters you know and wanted to go to Norrland and have a guy like that you know. I can certainly think Stockholmers are very narrow-minded in that way if I'm going to put them in a category, that they often believe it actually is the way it's depicted in movies, and the *Norrlands Guld* commercials are a perfect example, I mean you just have to laugh at it. I haven't thought about it so much or tried to explain that it's not like that, I've just thought it was sort of funny that they've understood it that way."

*Hanna: "När jag bodde i Stockholm så var det ju många som pratade om, du minns när Masjävlar kom, man sätter folk i fack, samma med Jägarna, man hörde om kvinnor som skrev brev du vet och ville till Norrland och ha en sån karl du vet. Nog kan jag tycka stockholmare är väldigt inskränkta på det viset om man nu ska sätta dom i ett fack, att dom många gånger tror att det faktiskt är så som det skildras på film, och det här med Norrlands Guld-reklamen är ett superexempel, ja så att jag menar det är ju bara att skratta åt det. Jag har inte tänkt på det så mycket eller försökt förklarar att så här är det inte utan jag har nog bara tyckt att det var lite kul att de uppfattat det så."*

Many representations of the rural and the urban are associated with the nature/culture dualism (Little, 2002; 1999). The urban is associated with culture – the sophisticated and urbane middle class:

Simon: "...but I don't feel like a Stockholmer like I did five years ago...I guess I'm a little more of a Norrlandian in my ways, I can feel torn. Because on the one hand I can feel like it's really charming if I can generalize about this down-to-earth thing that there can be a charming farmlike quality to Norrland, but on the other hand you can say, if you use farmlike quality in a negative way it can be a little clumsy, a little lacking in culture in the sense of high culture, that there's no one who's interested in culture..."

*Simon: -"...men jag känner mig inte som stockholmare som jag gjorde för fem år sedan ... jag är nog lite mer norrlänning till mitt sätt, jag kan känna mig kluven. För å ena sidan kan jag känna att det är väldigt charmigt om jag kan generalisera över det här jordnära att det kan finnas en charmig bondighet över Norrland, å andra sidan kan man säga, om man använder bondigheten i en negativ bemärkelse så kan det vara lite taffligt, lite kulturlöst i bemärkelsen finkultur, att det är ingen som är intresserad av kultur..."*

Rebecka: "...people are pretty polite to each other, you know the social codes...you use the right side of the escalator, you know what you should do to make it flow and things like that."

*Rebecka: "... människor är ganska hövliga mot varandra, man vet dom sociala koderna ... man går på höger sida i rulltrappan man vet vad man ska göra för att få det att flyta och sånna saker."*

Hanna, who grew up in a small village in the inland of Västerbotten in a working-class family, has a partner from Stockholm. She notices that they have different experiences and different attitudes about many of things, but most striking for her are their different experiences of culture, such as theatre, opera and music:

"Also this with the cultural life, he's very well informed about such things while I; movies and theater and things like that, you rent a movie at the corner store, I guess that's it...I haven't tried that cultural life like he has, he's had it for free right around the corner."

*"Också det här med kulturlivet, han är väldigt insatt i sådana saker medan jag; film och teater och sånt där, man hyr en film på kiosken, det var väl det ... just det där kulturlivet har jag inte provat på så som han har gjort, han har haft det gratis bara runt knuten."*

As asserted previously, all spaces and places are 'classed'. One way the small villages in the inland areas of Norrland are classed is through the lack of cultural manifestations like theatres and concert halls. Not to say there is no music and no theatres in the inland areas, but the urban culture is termed 'fine art' to a greater extent and is consumed primarily by the urban middle and upper classes. Even though the amenities, in the form of theatres and concert halls, are there, few people actually consume the culture. However, place marketers and other representatives of the 'urban turn' argue that many benefit from these, by most people, largely unused cultural manifestations since they are important for the image of place.

## 7.5 Place and values

Place of residence has always been a matter of social position and identity and of how these are valued and judged. As pointed out by Massey and others, discourses of self-evident mobility need to be differentiated socially. Similarly as one can question the dominant narratives of the city as progress, one can question the notion of migration as fully democratic (Lawson, 1999;

Svensson, 2006), even though it is presented to us as such in the media and among politicians and researchers. As Maria puts it:

> "...to have a good life in the big city you need a lot of money. And I'm starting to realize that with my career as a social worker I'll never be especially rich. It would be interesting to see what the choices would've looked like if money hadn't been an obstacle, if you followed a feeling, that would be interesting."

> *"... för att få ett bra storstadsliv behöver man mycket pengar. Och jag börjar inse att med mitt yrke som socionom kommer jag aldrig bli särskilt rik. Det skulle vara intressant hur valen skulle sett ut om inte pengar skulle vara ett hinder, om man skulle följt en känsla, det skulle vara intressant."*

Maria, from Lund, similarly experiences a less competitive climate in Norrland, but as opposed to Rebecka this attracted her to Norrland. She expected it to be less competitive and individualistic:

> "...I'm thinking of some form of solidarity, that you don't do just what you yourself want and the individualistic to save your own skin and knock everybody else out of the game...I sort of think that in Norrland you have a little less of this disrupted aspect and are less stressed the whole time like I think you can be in Lund and Malmö...always on the way to something better..."

> *"... jag tänker på någon form av solidaritet att man inte kör på vad jag själv och det individualistiska för att rädda sitt eget skinn och konkurrera ut alla ... Jag tänker lite att i Norrland har man lite mindre av det här splittrade och är mindre stressad hela tiden som jag tycker man kan vara i Lund och Malmö ... hela tiden på väg till något bättre ..."*

In the same way Simon, from Stockholm, constructs Norrland as some kind of neoliberal free zone and Stockholm as a place for go-getters. He identifies with an alternative notion to that of the 'city as progress':

> "I can relax a little more, I don't need to live up to something I experience as some form of performance culture that Stockholm is, it doesn't have to be all of Stockholm but just the little circle I hung out with and the family I grew up in, it doesn't have to be representative, but at the same time maybe people who move to the big city are a little more in-

terested in the unknown or there's some kind of enterprise among people who head for Stockholm…"

*"Jag kan slappna av lite mer, jag behöver inte leva upp till något som jag upplever vara någon form av prestationskultur som Stockholm är, det behöver inte vara hela Stockholm utan bara den lilla krets jag umgicks med och den familj jag växte upp i, det behöver inte vara representativt, men samtidigt kanske är dom som flyttar till storstan lite mer sugen på det okända eller det finns ju någon form av företagsamhet bland dom som rör sig till Stockholm …"*

The representations of Norrland as egalitarian and equal could be explained by its political history, but also by the flat social structure that has traditionally characterized the area; The absence of aristocracy and large estates may have affected the social life there (Nilsson, 2009). The Social Democrats have run Sweden for decades, yet all my informants who moved to the North of Sweden react to the political climate. It both attracts and repels:

Robert: "It's red here, very red…there's a blindness to the fact that there's a radical culture, that it's rather unique in that aspect, I don't have it in writing or anything but I've heard that 45% voted for the Left Party in the EU elections, that's a pretty remarkable figure…"

*Robert: "Det är rött här, väldigt rött … det finns en blindhet att det finns en radikal kultur, att den är ganska unik i det avseendet, nu har jag inte papper på det, men jag har hört att det var 45 % som röstade på Vänster Partiet till EU det är en ganska anmärkningsvärd siffra …"*

Simon: "There's something else about Norrland, class differences aren't as palpable, you don't see them in the same way…I can almost be ashamed when I'm in Stockholm…immigrants become third-class citizens…I can be ashamed of it, and I stick my head in the sand and get out of there. Here there aren't as clear class differences, in either Luleå or Umeå…"

*Simon: "Det är en annan sak med Norrland, klasskillnaderna är inte lika påtagliga man ser dom inte på samma sätt … jag kan nästan skämmas när jag är i Stockholm … invandrare blir tredje klassens invånare … jag kan skämmas för det, då stoppar jag hellre huvudet i sanden och sticker därifrån. Här finns det inte lika tydliga klasskillnader varken i Luleå eller Umeå …"*

Norrland is described as more homogenous, with fewer inequalities. It is contrasted to modern, individualistic and competitive urban areas, sometimes also referred to as 'multicultural' and typically celebrating an urban mixing of culture in public space (see e.g. Young, 2002; Boyd, 2006; Laurier and Philo, 2006; Thrift, 2005). Moreover, within these white identity narratives of my informants the multicultural city is additionally constructed as problematic, in the sense that immigrants and integration are represented as problematic. The immigrant others are represented as absent in Norrland, but also as aliens and others within the cities in the South.

## 7.6 Conclusions

The narratives offer alternative ways of thinking of the urban and the rural. Since they all identify with both, this may suggest dialectical relations between different people and places. People desire and belong across the places of migration (Lawson, 1999). Even so, the hegemonic understanding of the city as progress is repeatedly reproduced by the informants, while at the same time the rural is described by some of them as progressive for valuing the immaterial things people in urban areas have forgotten. These narratives can be viewed as ways of resisting the neoliberal understanding of the progressive city reproduced by geographers, politicians and the media.

Even so, in different ways the narratives illustrate the 'taken-for-granted' discourse on Norrland, and the rural as authentic and backward and the urban as shallow but progressive. In their narratives, the informants are apt to identify with the positive traits of both the urban and the rural. Similar to the commercial for Norrlands Guld (see Chapter 5), the informants attempt to be authentic and progressive at the same time. Norrland may become interesting and 'alternative' and almost exotic when represented by the informants who have moved there, but also by those who have left for the big city.

For some people and in some instances, belonging to a place and the construction of a collective identity based on place are experienced as more important than anything else. Categories such as class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and so forth are experienced as secondary. bell hooks (2009) writes about the ways geographical origin separates citizens of the same nation – how a person with a certain dialect can be ridiculed and thus subjugated by the geographical hierarchies so apparent and taken for granted that they become 'truth' to most people. Also, the narratives of my interviewees point to the importance of origin when it comes to being judged and measured by others. I suggest that my interviewees talk about the ways representations of place become one with the representations of people, how the identities of

place and the identities of people become mutually constituted. For some individuals the identities of a place may become intrinsically connected to their personal identities; But also, the identity of a place, for instance a hometown, may grow stronger when one is excluded from representations of another place. This can be exemplified by Lisa's narratives about she moved to the city of Göteborg from a small village in Västernorrland, or when Simon moved from Stockholm to Luleå. The constructions of a 'culture of a place' may be a way to obscure the past and present economical, political and social relations of class, ethnicity, gender and so forth, to make 'difference' simply a matter of 'culture'. But the feelings of belonging to a place may be linked to (one's distinctive and subjective sense of) the 'culture of the place' (hooks, 2009), which may become the familiar social relations and situated practices associated with a place.

Thus, the reproduction, resistance and reworkings of binaries and hierarchies are very much part of individual identity projects. The informants construct their identities in relation to an 'other', be it a Norrlandian or a person from Stockholm. Nevertheless, representations in film, the news media and so on are of importance and can be used to enhance difference or feelings of marginalization. Belonging to a place and the construction of a collective identity based on place may sometimes become very important, and some of the informants talk about places and instances in which they have felt included or excluded, special or just one in the crowd.

Migration becomes an important part of the identities of the informants. A person from 'out of town' may be viewed as more exciting and interesting, for the simple reason that this person has travelled and is less apt to share a common background with people at a new place. However, as also shown in the previous chapter, immigrants, regardless of their interesting backgrounds, are viewed as problems within so-called 'multicultural' cities; This particular problem is something Norrland is represented as being free from. Norrland is described as more homogenous with fewer inequalities, even when it comes to class differences.

The discourses on Norrland and the Norrlandians among the informants share some common traits with those reproduced in the media, film and advertising. The informants reproduce a notion of the people of Norrland as less enterprising and more of a traditional sort. The laid-back attitude and the absence of competition attracts and repels. In Stockholm the informants seem to benefit from the representations of Norrlandians as laid-back and genuine, and the representations of Norrland and the Norrlandians as more reliable and genuine are more prominent in the narratives. This can be seen

as a discourse that is more likely to be reproduced by the Norrlandians themselves.

# 8. Concluding analysis

The starting point of this thesis has been to study popular representations of Norrland as a part of the construction of regional and national identities and in the context of the discourses on neoliberal globalization. The aim was to draw attention to the ideological effects of representations, as well as the reenactment, resistance and material effects of different Norrland representations.

As the end of this thesis approaches, I first want to make a few general points about what I believe are important results of this analysis. First, Norrland has been consistently reproduced, resisted and reworked through various discursive networks and practices over centuries, as simultaneously authentic and obsolete. Drawing on these discourses shows how the representations of Norrland in the news are part of a wider discursive network that represents Norrland as an 'internal other' within Sweden. Secondly, discourses on Swedish modernity and on neoliberal growth and competition reproduce Norrland and its people as inferior to the rest of Sweden. These representations are reworked and resisted and result in 'real' material effects, as discussed in the analysis of the film *The Hunters*. Thirdly, in order to resist these representations and become part of the 'modern', progressive world, people in certain places need to adjust to neoliberal ideals of competitiveness and growth. I have shown how politicians (through place marketers) and industries (through advertising experts) reproduce, rework and resist representations of Norrland and the people who live there. Finally, the ideology of neoliberalism affects the identities of the people in the othered region as they have to contend with representations that present their region as the antithesis of progressive urban modernity. In their resistance to these representations, residents of the othered region resort to different strategies to create suitable alternative narratives of identity.

I have argued that northern Sweden and its population are represented as a category whereby we can recognize processes of otherness similar to constructions of the 'other' described by Said (1978); Thus this Orientalism is internal, exaggerating difference within the nation. The internal orientalist discourse represents a subordinate section of the state in a particular way so as to produce a national identity with desirable characteristics. The differences are made to seem 'natural' through journalistic practices and textual choices, through the mixing of 'facts' and 'fiction' in film, and through the representations of place marketers and other economic interests but also in the narratives of individuals. What is apparent in the empirical chapters is the two-fold way Norrland is depicted, as both authentic and obsolete. This

makes many of the representations of Norrland and Norrlanders elusive since the stereotypes are both legitimizing and criticizing.

The reproduction of urban/rural binaries within Sweden is a consequence of the centralizing logic of capitalism (and 'the urban turn'). The logic of these processes gives urban areas advantages when it comes to attracting production. The circular and cumulative causality within the economy makes wealthy regions wealthier and poor regions poorer (Harvey, 2006). The often minor geographical differences between places in Sweden, when it comes to both natural resources and socially constructed differences, are initially overstated but are reproduced and enacted through the fusing of representations in news and politics but also by way of stereotypes in film and advertising as well as in the narratives of interviews. Thus, as pointed out several times in this thesis, not everyone has the same power to shape, rework and resist discourse; power enables and constrains practice. Since this thesis has emphasized representations in the media, the main focus has been on those with the power to resist and rework discourses in media and politics. It is evident that many people in Norrland do not want to identify with the old and traditional, such as politicians, businessmen and debaters. Rather, they wish to represent themselves and parts of Norrland as modern and urban, as in the analysis of Norrland in the news discussed in Chapter 4, or as in the case of the not always successful branding of Umeå as a modern city in Chapter 6. Place marketers in urban Umeå are fighting the stereotypical representations of the North, as a wilderness, traditional and obsolete, by using global place marketing rhetorics of the 'creative city' and the 'culture city'. But when marketed in a European context, Umeå still relies on the myths and exoticism of the North. This illustrates the complex interplay of relational geographies, the urgency to attract investments and visitors to a place, and the efforts of place marketers or individuals to reconstruct its image.

Yet, the representations are reworked and resisted by those who rebel against the discourses on the rural and the urban and who insist on the possibility to live another life outside the city (see interview with Lisa in Chapter 7, and the works of scholars and debaters such as Jansson (2010) Harvey ( 2006) and Greider(2001). The work of authors and musicians, the texts by politicians and journalist, the everyday conversations between individuals and the remaking of commodities may form a discourse of resistance towards geographical hierarchies and stereotypes.

Nevertheless, the representations of the 'urban as progress' influence people in their everyday lives. The discourse of growth and competition makes it impossible to continue with farming up North, but makes it possible for young people to work abroad. The discourse on contemporary modernity

makes it possible for young people to imitate the lifestyles of actors in American sit-coms, but makes it nearly impossible for them to find a job in their small home village. As shown in Chapter 6, the identities of the informants are linked to the representations of place; Thus, the reasons for young people to leave rural areas have to do not only with the fact that it is hard to make a living in some of these areas but also with the ideals of growth and competition, the wider 'power geometries' (Massey, 2004) and representations of place. To put it more simply, it is essentially about what kind of life and what kind of livelihood that are accepted.

The stereotypes of the traditional Norrland imply a discourse of Norrland as behind 'us' in development, as part of another time (Massey, 1991; cf. Said, 1978). The contrasting stereotypes of people in Stockholm may suggest a longing for past times when life was simpler and when people were more genuine and innocent, but it is only for a brief moment and it is only in certain contexts and circumstances, such as when looking for people to rent apartments or looking for reliable employees (see Chapter 7). In the interviews and through analyzing the narratives in ads and film, the ironic stereotypes of people in Stockholm become a manifestation of dominance, as the representations of the Norrlander reproduce representations of an underdog, although genuine.

Representations in popular culture become enmeshed with representations in the news media and politics, which conflates geography and class by way of positioning representations of the middle class in urban spaces and the white working class in rural spaces. The absence of working class people in Stockholm is evident both in the representations of the 'creative city' among scholars, journalists and politicians (cf. Storper and Scott, 2009 ) and in popular representations of Stockholm. The Swedish elites are typically the ones to represent urban areas, in consequence, the working-class in the urban areas become invisible (cf. Ross, 2001). I have highlighted the construction of intensified differences between the city and the countryside, between the 'public' and the elite. These constructions of differences are apparent in the representations of the urban and the rural; what and who is represented, by whom, and what is included and excluded in the representations.

However, Norrland and the rural may be represented differently when identified with people who are not typically associated with Norrland and the rural. If inhabited by people who fit the neoliberal ideals of growth and competitiveness, the rural becomes 'alternative', a choice, an 'alternative lifestyle'. The rural in this example, Norrland, becomes a space where middle-class people may find themselves (as shown in Chapters 4 and 6). What is more, the modern urban dweller can always return to the rural or to Norr-

land (as exemplified in Chapters 4 and 6) and remain modern but also claim the genuine. This may be seen as a way to rework the representations of the rural and Norrland while at the same time upholding the discourse of certain rural populations as obsolete.

The reproductions of internationally recognized stereotypes play a part in the construction of specific places and people. The American redneck or hillbilly, memorably portrayed in movies such as *Mississippi Burning* and *Deliverance,* finds its Swedish counterpart in *The Hunters*, but also in a lighter version in the ads for Norrlands Guld beer. These hopelessly traditional and obsolete characters are similarly positioned in rural spaces that have been severely hit by the processes of rural restructuring and neoliberalization. Like his American counterpart, the Swedish hillbilly is constructed in contrast to modern and urban people. Global processes contribute to the making of global stereotypes of the poor white working class (cf. Jarosz and Lawson, 2001). Even though we know they are stereotypes we are well acquainted with them; thus they did not appear out of nowhere but are part of a global redneck discourse on traditional and obsolete rural people.

Norrlandians are grouped into a Western faction of people who do not fit into 'modern society' - spatial 'internal others' conveniently positioned in space. The internationally recognized stereotypes play a part in the construction of specific places and people, regardless of their accuracy, for instance the rural as intolerant with 'traditional' values.[58] These stereotypes may be reproduced by the Norrlandians themselves, by selling exotic images of the North, or by using humor as a strategy to laugh at and make visible (and thereby neutralize) the hierarchical representations of the center and the periphery. But these strategies may also reproduce social boundaries and legitimize stereotypes and power relations. I have argued that something has happened with the representations of the Norrland population; from the representations of a traditional but honest and hard-working population to representations of an obsolete, stagnant, dishonest and non-enterprising population. These alterations in representation are part of the shift from the welfarist parole "the whole of Sweden should live", to the neoliberal "the whole of Sweden should provide growth", and are essential to the reproduc-

[58] Counties and cities in Norrland may be considered as some of the more 'tolerant' toward immigrants, refugees (Integrationsverket 2005:02) and homosexuals (RFSL 2006).

tion of the Swedish national identity. The 'backward periphery', as defined and represented by the modern urban elite, is important for maintaining the distinction between the modern and the traditional. The transformations (modernization and integration) of the peripheries, as well as the uneven power relations between the modern centers and the non-modern peripheries, are thus essential for building modern nation-states.

Racism, sexism, tax evasion and other phenomena dissociated with the discourse on Swedish modernity can, via the logics of internal orientalism, be geographically situated in places like Norrland (but also other places dislocated from 'urban modernity'), as these places and people remain acceptable targets of the elite. Thus, 'outmoded qualities' are represented as nonexistent within the urban middle-class, but highly present within the rural white working class. In this way, subordinate and marginalized people and places are constructed. The spotlight is set on the certain aspects and specific phenomena, such as tax evaders and openly xenophobic elements. Thus, the relationality of geographies of difference that is embedded in national institutions and practices can be concealed, sometimes by way of daily clever remarks, categorizations and political bloopers, and sometimes by way of major film productions.

It is necessary to scrutinize the ways people and places are represented, and particularly the representations of populations with a history of marginalization – because these representations are ideological; they tell us something about the social world of which they are a part. The Swedish self-image is still one of a progressive and modern nation where equality persists and racism, sexism, class boundaries and other conflicts are long gone. Hence, the representations analyzed in this thesis serve not only as contrasts but also as strategies in the quest to blame certain groups for problems that initially originated in unequal opportunities and structures of power related to, for instance, ethnicity, class, gender and disabilities. As more pressure is put on individuals and places to produce constant growth, the more certain people and places are viewed as 'unproductive' and problematic. The problems of depopulation and diminishing job opportunities in the inland areas of Norrland are blamed on the population, similarly as, for instance, immigrants are blamed for segregation in the big cities (Eriksson et al. 2000). This thesis has focused on the inequalities and problems within Sweden, hence it is not only about Norrland, it is about situated practices, and the intricate and unfixed ways in which news media, popular culture, marketing and selling reproduce discourses of the (internal) 'other', as belonging to a different 'culture', time and place. It is about those less able to influence the news, politics and popular culture and those with less purchasing power. Indeed, following this reasoning, some people must necessarily be repre-

sented as the'other', far from the ideals of modernity and progress, even (*with)in* Sweden (see Pred, 2000).

Further research on the interplay and making of national peripheries and national identities are needed within a wide range of disciplines and research fields. It is about finding alternative ways of representing; by deconstructing binaries and discovering and foregrounding things that are normally silenced. In this way critical perspectives on the workings of representations can contribute to an understanding of how and why spatial difference and regional inequity are reproduced, and play a part in formulating and implementing strategies for change.

# 9. Sammanfattning

Sverige som den imaginära gemenskap den är konstrueras i förhållande till 'rumsliga andra', både inom nationen och utanför (Anderson, 1983; Foucault, 2003). Jag fokuserar här på Norrland som en av de platser som konstrueras som avvikande och som undantag i den nationella diskursen. Istället för att fokusera på 'klassisk kolonialism' och vanliga teman för postkolonial forskning (se t.ex. Said, 1978; Ridanpää, 2007) fokuserar den här avhandlingen på ojämlikhet och problem inom västerländska länder, och dess koppling till kolonialism. För att till exempel förstå reproducerandet av skillnad mellan nationer kan det vara viktigt att förstå de maktrelationer och de processer som styr reproducerandet av skillnad inom nationen, de koloniala strategier som utövas på den egna befolkningen (Foucault, 2003).

Det övergripande syftet är att studera representationer av Norrland som en del av konstruktionen av regionala och nationella identiteter och som del av diskurser om neoliberal globalisering. Den här avhandlingen fokuserar på de ideologiska effekterna av representationer; reproducerandet, omarbetandet och motståndet, men också de materiella konsekvenserna av olika representationer. De frågor som blir relevanta, och som denna avhandling genomsyras av, skulle lika gärna kunna gälla en annan plats i världen som liksom Norrland representeras som svag och perifer.

Föreställningar av vad Norrland är har förändrats över tid, från att vara en mytomspunnet näst intill fiktiv plats till att bli en plats som fick representera det bästa av nationen Sverige (se t.ex. Sörlin, 1988; Loeffler, 2001). Den geografiska föreställning av Norrland idag domineras av glesbygdsproblematik. Norrland som rymmer en tredjedel av Sverige buntas samman. Norrland blir i den populära geografiska föreställningen ett område med utflyttning och arbetslöshet. Norrlänningarna blir genom samma logik de 'interna andra', de som inte flyttar fastän alla andra gör det och de som bor kvar trots arbetslöshet och därmed kan stämplas som bidragstagare.

Sverige består av flera olika regioner, vissa anses vara dynamiska, de som i den nationella diskursen driver nationen framåt, de som representeras som moderna och progressiva regioner. Därtill finns det de regioner som lämnats kvar i modernitetens kölvatten. Genom urbaniseringen och moderniseringens intåg blev delar av Norrland lämnade på efterkälken trots de värdefulla naturresurser som regionen bifogar över. Norrland perifera plats i den nationella historiska diskursen är en följd av naturgeografiska förhållanden som försvårade bosättningen i norr. Norrlands forna status som koloni är en vik-

tig faktor för konstruerandet av Norrland som objekt för 'intern orientalism' och som en 'rumslig andre' i svenska folkets geografiska föreställningsvärld.

Det moderna Sverige representeras av storstadsregionerna, här representeras människor som utbildade, kultiverade och toleranta. Sveriges nationella diskurs premierar det urbana framför det rurala, då det urbana är det som får representera den *moderna* nationalistiska självbilden. I denna geografiska hierarki befinner sig Stockholm högst upp och Norrland lägst ned, Norrland blir allt som Stockholm inte är. I diskursen om Norrland så skapas dikotomierna stad - land, framförallt så blir Stockholm den stad som ständigt får stå som jämförande geografisk enhet. På detta sätt (re)produceras essentialiserade identiteter av både Norrland och Stockholm. Det handlar om konstruktioner av stereotyper på båda sidor av den binära skalan. Reproducerandet av skillnaden mellan det urbana och rurala är en konsekvens av kapitalismens centraliserings logik, urbana områden har övertag när det kommer till att attrahera produktion, detta gör rika regioner rikare och fattiga fattigare (Harvey, 2006). Ökade krav på platser att vara produktiva att attrahera produktion, investeringar och befolkning leder till ökad konkurrens mellan platser. Forskare med fokus på regional tillväxt har pekat ut staden som motorn, i staden sker kreativa möten här möts de utbildade kreativa människorna. Andra forskare menar också att det i staden utvecklas en större tolerans och acceptans för skillnad (Thrift, 2005). Detta kan ses som en neoliberal diskurs med ideal endast i den produktiva individen. Denna diskurs reproducerar bilden av 'de andra', de som inte uppfyller idealen; de oproduktiva, de som bor på fel plats eller kommer från fel plats.

Representationerna av Norrland har förändrats från att främst beskriva den hårt arbetande genuine norrlänningen till att representera norrlänningar såsom de representeras i mina studier av nyhetsmedia, film, marknadsföring och bland mina informanter. De kan sägas vara del av en förändrad syn på Sverige, politiker stödde tidigare parollen om att Hela Sverige Ska Leva, nu handlar det snarare om att hela Sverige ska bidra med tillväxt (ITPS, 2005).

Avhandlingen består av fyra delstudier där tidningsartiklar, film, marknadsföring och intervjuer analyserats. Den första studien analyserar, med hjälp av kritisk diskursanalys, representationer av Norrland i nyhetsmedia. Studien visar hur norra Sverige beskrivs och namnges och hur norra Sverige främst förknippas med glesbygd, bidragsberoende och avfolkning.[59] Något som återkommer i alla delstudier är att Norrland representeras i förhållande till andra platser; ofta får Stockholm och Norrland stå i motsatsförhållande

[59] Denna studie har i omarbetad form publicerats i Geografiska Annaler series B
Eriksson (2008) (Re)producing a peripheral region – northern Sweden in the news. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 90 (4): 1-20

till varandra där Norrland beskrivs som glesbygd och bakåtsträvande medan Stockholm beskrivs som urbant, modernt och kreativt. Dessa stereotypiseringar och generaliseringar döljer förstås många företeelser och människor, dessa blir exkluderade och följaktligen inte en del av platsen eller nationen; de blir 'de andra'.

Den andra delstudien består av en diskursanalys av filmen Jägarna, här diskuteras hur "fakta" och "fiktion" blandas; hur representationer i film blir "sanna" i t.ex. mediedebatten om bidragsberoende. Studien visar hur representationer, gamla och nya, blir del av ett diskursivt nätverk och färdas mellan politiska, vetenskapliga och populärkulturella diskurser, därtill visar studien hur stereotyper reproduceras också av de som kan tänkas missgynnas av dem.[60]

Den tredje delstudien är en diskursanalys av olika typer av platsmarknadsföring, den marknadsföring som görs på små kommuners hemsidor, Umeås kulturhuvudstadssatsning, men också produkter som marknadsförs genom att stereotypisera eller omarbeta representationer av norra Sverige. Sedan 90-talet har Sverige undan för undan antagit neoliberala strategier för att öka nationens tillväxt i en "globaliserad värld". En tydlig effekt av dessa strategier är en ökad konkurrens mellan platser; städer, kommuner och län konkurrerar om arbetstillfällen och utbildade människor. Förändringen från en diskurs om att hela Sverige ska leva till en diskurs om att hela Sverige ska bidra med tillväxt får effekt på de platser och människor som inte når upp till de högt ställda kraven. Detta har gett upphov till stereotypisering av vissa grupper och vissa platser. Idealen reproduceras i media och normen har blivit den urbana vita medelklassen och det avvikande blir människorna som inte är urbana, vita och medelklass.

Den sista delstudien bygger på sju intervjuer, denna studie visar hur identiteter konstrueras i relation till plats och hur representationer av platser och människor inverkar på detta. Representationer av den lyckade moderna, urbana och kreativa individen reproduceras i populärkultur, inom politik och forskning, men också genom informanternas narrativ. På samma sätt reproduceras en bild av glesbygdsbon och främst Norrlänningen (men också till exempel Värmlänningen och Dalmasen) som bakåtsträvande och omodern. Informanterna, beroende på om de är man, kvinna, stadsbo eller landsbygdsbo, medelklass eller arbetarklass använder olika strategier för att hantera representationer av platser och de ideal som presenteras för dem genom film, nyhetsmedia och politik.

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[60] Denna studie har i omarbetad form publicerats i Journal of Rural Studies
Eriksson (2010) People in Stockholm are smarter than countryside folks: Reproducing Urban And Rural Imaginaries In Film And Life. *Journal of Rural Studies* 26: 95-104

Avhandlingen visar hur Norrland representeras som autentisk och omodern/bakåtsträvande på samma gång. När Norrland representeras som autentiskt finns alltid representationen av dess motsats med, det vill säga det moderna men ytliga. Därmed kan representationerna av det omoderna reproduceras tillsammans med representationerna av det autentiska. Norrland som autentiskt reproduceras av norrlänningar själva, till exempel genom marknadsföring, men också i mötet med människor från städer. Representationerna av den genuine och autentiske lantisen i populärkultur för tankarna till en annan tid, före urbaniseringen, då livet var enklare och människorna mer oskyldiga och naiva. Även dessa på ytan positiva representationer kan tolkas som en del av en kolonial diskurs; att representera vissa platser och människor som mindre utvecklade och moderniserade.

Diskurser om det moderna Sverige och diskurser om tillväxt och konkurrens, reproducerar representationer av Norrland som tärande, dessa representationer omarbetas och motarbetas och får materiella konsekvenser genom till exempel marknadsföring och genom på det sätt vi relaterar till olika platser och människor.

För att omarbeta representationer av norra Sverige som omodernt och bakåtsträvande och bli en del av den 'moderna' världen måste människor anpassa sig till neoliberala ideal vad gäller tillväxt och konkurrens. Jag visar hur politiker (genom platsmarknadsföring), och företagare (genom reklam) reproducerar, omarbetar och motarbetar representationer av Norrland och norrlänningar.

I intervjustudien (kapitel 7) visar jag hur människors identiteter kan påverkas av dessa ideal, genom det att de måste relatera och reagera på de olika representationerna. Informanterna i min studie påverkas av diskursen om den 'progressiva staden'; det blir naturligt för dem att flytta från landsbygden till staden. De som gör tvärtom ifrågasätts av sin omgivning. I slutändan handlar det om vilka livsval som uppmuntras och vilka livsval som accepteras.

Mer forskning borde fokusera på samspelet mellan konstruktionen av nationella periferier och nationella. Genom att dekonstruera dikotomier och sätta fokus på sådant som normalt är osynligt och nedtystat kan vi förstå hur och varför rumsliga skillnader och regional ojämlikhet reproduceras. Bara då kan vi formulera och förverkliga strategier för förändring.

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**Newspaper articles**

*Aftonbladet* (Political bias/ inclination: Independently Social Democratic. The leading tabloid paper in Sweden:):

2 February 1996 Svensk västern - på gott och ont. Jens Peterson. Review

9 February 1997 ...Men Bergman är inte imponerad av Jägarna. Jan Olov Andersson. Review

17 February 1996 Männen tror det är fritt fram. Lotta Reberg. News article

7 March 1996 Annette Kullenberg: Och sen skar de halsen av ryskan... Annette Kullenberg. Review

7 April 1996 Jägarna på riktigt. Tore Börjesson. News article

23 July 1998 Stockholmare är smartare än lantisar... Anders Johansson. Chronicle

27 July 2003 Hur kan prostitutionen undgå polisen i norr? Johanne Hildebrandt. Chronicle

14 March 2004 Titta dom snackar fortfarande. Lasse Anrell. Chronicle

20 August 2004 "Granskningens" final en fullträff. Kerstin Hallert. Chronicle

2 December 2004 Nu är det klart för Jägarna 2. Jon Forslin & Karin Lindstedt. News item

11 February 2005 Schlager är hippt tack vare bögarna. Fredrik Virtanen. Chronicle

*Dagens Media* 27 March, (2008): *Norrlands Guld skrotar Ingemar*, Kristin Djerf

*Dagens Nyheter* (Political bias/ inclination: Independently liberal. The leading daily newspaper in Sweden:):

2 January, 1997. Opinionssiffror: Svenskarna är surast på EU. Kuslig läsning för EU:s politiker. Mats Holmberg. News item

5 September 1999 "Skapa ett statligt storstadsverk". Storstäderna behöver - ...en "pådrivande lobbyorganisation", skriver socialdemokrater. Hillevi Larsson, Britt-Marie Lindkvist, Nalin P m.fl. Debate

14 March 2002 Jippo värvar nya jämtar. Ellin Wrethov, News item

30 May 2002 Krav på regeringsansvar för Norrlandstrafik. TT

21 November 2002 Fler flygturer till Norrland.TT

13 December 2002 Monopol och nedlagda tågförbindelser har fått näringsliv och offentliga organ att tröttna: ”Hela Norrland säger nej till SJ”. Monica Robin Svensson, Gerhard Larsson, Maggi Mikaelsson med flera. Debate

18 October 2003 ”Sjukskrivning används som regionalstöd” Lokala attityder bakom den höga sjukfrånvaron i Norrbotten, skriver ekonomiprofessor. Mats Persson. Debate

17 June 2003 Varför stannar männen kvar? Maria Carlshamre. Chronicle

21 November 2003 Norrland slår tillbaka. TT

16 February 2004 ”Stockholm en tärande region”. Nya beräkningar visar att stockholmarna får mest av staten medan norrlänningarna missgynnas. Gerhard Larsson. Debate

26 August 2004 Allt fler unga män lämnar glesbygden. Lena Karvik. News item

28 April 2004 Här stannar jag kvar. Henrik Berggren. Editorial

23 February 2006 Stockholmare är smartare än lantisar. Anders Isaksson. Editorial

*Göteborgs-posten* (Political bias/ inclination: Liberal. A local newspaper of Göteborg):

19 September 1995 Hela Älvsbyn filmar med Kjell. Sylvia Hopen. News item

*Helsingborgs Dagblad* (Political bias/ inclination: Independent. A local newspaper of the city of Helsingborg):

13 July 1996 Otäck, realistisk polisfilm. Review

18 April 1996 Vardags-fusket. News item

*Norrbottens-Kuriren* (Political bias/ inclination: Independently moderat. A local newspaper in the county Norrbotten):

25 October 2003 Omfattande tjuvjakt. Armi Rousu. News article

4 October 2005 Kjell Sundvall, Pistvakt och cynismen. Klas Granström. Chronicle

*Västerbottens-Kuriren* (Political bias/ inclination: Liberal. The leading local newspaper in the county Västerbotten):

7 Feburary 1998 Norrlands trend att skratta åt. Gunnar Bränström. Debate

2 October 2004 Filmer från norr lockar publiken Populärmusik från Vittula och Så som i himmelen drar fulla salonger på bion i Umeå. Mattias Barsk. Review

6 February 1996 Sluta svartmåla vårt Norrbotten. Ronny Olovsson. Chronicle

7 February 1996 - Visst dricker folk hembränt i Norrbotten. Ronny Olovsson. Chronicle

**Appendix**

Newspaper articles from Dagens Nyheter (DN), Chapter 4

| ***VÄSTERBOTTEN*** | ***Date*** | ***Author*** |
|---|---|---|
| *Hälsokampanj gör sjukt län friskare* | 3 July 2004 | TT [Tidningarnas Telegrafbyrå, a leading Swedish news agency] |
| *Stilla kabinfärd i ostens rike* | 9 May 2004 | Olle Säverman |
| *10 tips i Västerbotten* | 9 May 2004 | |
| *Allt fler dör på Västerbottenvägar* | 28 September 2003 | TT |
| *Attrakiva tomter ger fler tvister* | 24 July 2003 | TT |
| *Över 60 bränder i Västerbotten* | 22 July 2003 | TT |
| *Jordskalv i Västerbotten* | 25 April 2003 | TT |
| *Framåt för s-kvinnor i Västerbotten* | 19 February 2002 | TT |
| *Guldrush i norr: Lärare gräver guld i Västerbotten* | 18 January 2002 | Tobias Hammar |
| *Samisk offerplats kan bli reservat* | 7 October 2001 | TT |
| *Turistföreningens Västerbotten* | 26 November 2000 | Olle Säverman |
| *På högfjället med liten ränsel* | 25 June 2000 | Sören Lövenhaft |

***JÄMTLAND***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Glesbygdsbor kan få mobil vård. Samhällsservice på hjul föreslås för Jämtlands avfolkningsorter* | 24 May 2004 | Kari Molin |
| *Fjällen bjuder på fäbodliv* | 9 May 2004 | Hans Arbman |
| *10 tips i Jämtland* | 9 May 2004 | |
| *Jämtland kan få ny storkommun* | 2 April 2004 | TT |
| *Miljonstöd till småskalig produktion* | 19 Mach 2004 | TT |
| *Norsk fotbollsstjärna satsar i Jämtlandsfjäll* | 28 September 2003 | TT |
| *4 Årebyar: Åre - snö för hela slanten* | 19 January 2003 | Jan Malmborg, Olle Lindberg, Bengt Erik Schöier and Helena Öberg |
| *På fyra ben över fjället* | 7 July 2002 | Helena Öberg |
| *Försäkringskassan: Halverade öppettider i Jämtland* | 12 July 2002 | Eva Karin Gyllenberg |
| *Fjälltrakter lockar med äventyr* | 17 March 2002 | |
| *Jippo värvar nya jämtar* | 14 March 2002 | Ellin Wrethov |
| *Persson landar i "folkets paradis"* | 2 February 2002 | Christian Palme |
| *Tre frågor...* | 30 November 2001 | Charlotta Eriksson |
| *Östersund/måndag: Möte med trav och lek* | 10 April 2001 | Thomas Michelsen |
| *Jämtland lockar med buller* | 25 February 2001 | TT |

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|---|---|---|
| *Landskap, typ: Jämtland* | 15 July 2000 | Olle Säverman |
| *På högfjället med liten ränsel* | 25 June 2000 | Sören Lövenhaft |

***NORRBOTTEN***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Persson lovar miljardsatsningar* | 28 March 2004 | TT |
| *Norrbotten stoppar nya naturreservat* | 31 January 2004 | Lars Ingemar Karlsson |
| *"Sjukskrivning används som regionalstöd". Lokala attityder ligger bakom den höga sjukfrånvaron i Norrbotten, skriver ekonomiprofessor.* | 18 October 2003 | Mats Persson |
| *Varför stannar männen kvar?* | 17 June 2003 | Maria Carlshamre |
| *Kulturell jättesatsning där norrbottningen har huvudrollen* | 10 May 2003 | Nicholas Wenno |
| *Analys kortade vårdköer* | 25 April 2003 | TT |
| *"Gränsen nådd för partilojaliteten". Kommunalråd (s) varnar Göran Persson: Väljarflykt hotar i utarmat Norrbotten* | 24 April 2003 | Bengt Niska, Leif Nilsson and Arne Honkamaa |
| *Bakslag för ny järnväg i norr* | 9 January 2003 | Gunnar Jonsson |
| *Nya krav att Rosengren avgår* | 16 December 2002 | TT |
| *Varghona synlig i norr* | 14 December 2002 | Karin Bojs |
| *Miniintervjun: Första länsregissören går* | 21 September 2002 | Martin Stugart |

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|---|---|---|
| *Fler unga sjuka i Norrbotten* | 1 September 2002 | TT |
| *"Lönsamt med järnväg vid kusten"* | 31 August 2002 | TT |
| *Centerkrav på jobb till Norrbotten* | 28 August 2002 | TT |
| *Vårdjobb inget för karlar i norr* | 9 August 2002 | Irene Beertema |
| *Utvecklingsbidrag betydde mycket* | 12 March 2002 | TT |
| *Landstinget i Norrbotten varslar* | 10 January 2002 | TT |
| *Norrbottenspartiet: Med fasta steg mot riksdagen* | 24 October 2001 | Kristoffer Morén |
| *Norrbottenspartiet: "S-politik bäddar för Lars Törnman"* | 24 October 2001 | Kristoffer Morén |
| *Skidgymnasium läggs ned - trots ilskna protester* | 24 August 2001 | Stellan Kvarre |
| *BB-kritiker får inte medhåll* | 10 August 2001 | TT |
| *Fem frågor* | 22 May 2001 | Peter Bratt |
| *Norrbotten vill prova självstyre* | 15 May 2001 | TT |
| *S i norr vill förlänga Botniabanan* | 10 April 2001 | TT |
| *Norrbotten vill se unga företagare* | 8 April 2001 | TT |

***VÄSTERNORRLAND***

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|---|---|---|
| *Hundratals nekas äldreboende* | 24 January 2000 | TT |

***NORRLAND***

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|---|---|---|
| *Allt fler unga män lämnar glesbygden* | 26 August 2004 | Lena Karvik |

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|---|---|---|
| *Norrlänningar vill ha självstyre* | 8 June 2004 | TT |
| *Här stannar jag kvar* | 28 April 2004 | Henrik Berggren |
| *Protester mot flygförbud i norr* | 9 March 2004 | Anita Sjoblom |
| *"Stockholm en tärande region". Nya beräkningar visar att stockholmarna får mest av statens kaka medan norrlänningarna missgynnas* | 16 February 2004 | Gerhard Larsson |
| *Stor export från övre Norrland* | 4 December 2003 | TT |
| *Norrland slår tillbaka* | 21 November 2003 | TT |
| *Stor älgstam hotar träindustrin* | 19 August 2003 | TT |
| *"Landsbygdsfientliga s-toppar blåser till strid". Forskare anklagar tunga politiker i Mälardalen för att sabotera regeringens glesbygdspolitik.* | 18 July 2003 | Ronny Svensson |
| *"Norrland måste få behålla stöd"* | 19 February 2003 | TT |
| *Norrlänningar får frågor om hälsan* | 8 February 2003 | TT |
| *Samarbete nödvändigt i Norrland* | 19 December 2002 | Bengt Falkloo |
| *SJ: "Lämpligt börja i Norrland"* | 14 December 2002 | Maria Crofts |
| *Monopol och nedlagda tågförbindelser har fått näringsliv och offentliga organ att tröttna:*<br><br>*"Hela Norrland säger nej till SJ"* | 13 December 2002 | Monica Robin Svensson, Gerhard Larsson, Maggi Mikaelsson and others |

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|---|---|---|
| *Ljusare tider i Norrland* | 6 December 2002 | TT |
| *Fler flygturer till Norrland* | 21 November 2002 | TT |
| *Nätverk stärker Norrlands inland* | 26 September 2002 | TT |
| *Miljöhänsyn hotar tillgång på virke i Norrland* | 12 August 2002 | TT |
| *Samarbete lösning för kultur i norr* | 3 July 2002 | TT |
| *Krav på regeringsansvar för Norrlandstrafik* | 30 May 2002 | TT |
| *Norrlandslän i kamp för fortsatt EU-stöd* | 6 May 2002 | Kristoffer Morén |
| *Mål1-kassan töms redan i år* | 25 April 2002 | |
| *Vitbok i norr för fortsatt EU-stöd* | 12 April 2002 | TT |
| *Malmö Aviation vill flyga till Norrland igen* | 16 October 2001 | TT |
| *Regnet hotar elförsörjningen* | 11 September 2001 | Bengt Falkloo |

[i] Number of articles (n=38) about various topics concerning *Norrland*

| Topics | Number |
|---|---|
| Regional subsidies/EU-funding | 16 |
| Business | 7 |
| Migration/Depopulation | 5 |
| Public transport/Planning | 4 |
| State interventions | 2 |
| Weather | 2 |
| Health | 1 |
| Culture | 1 |

[ii] Most common topics in articles about the different counties

| Counties | Common topics |
|---|---|
| Gävleborg | - |
| Jämtland | Tourism (n=4), out-migr. (n=3) |
| Västerbotten | Tourism (n=4), reg. policy (n=3) |
| Västernorrland | Insufficient service |
| Norrbotten | Subsidies (n=8) |

[iii] Number of total articles (n=38) in which Norrland was specified/not specified as county, municipality or city

| Labeling in text | Number |
|---|---|
| Specified by county | 21 |
| Not specified | 17 |
| Specified by municipality | 1 |
| Specified by city | 0 |

[iv] Number of articles about Norrland in which the counties/cities, places are mentioned

| Counties | As county | As city/place |
|---|---|---|
| Gävleborg | 2 | - |
| Jämtland | 7 | 5 |
| Norrbotten | 12 | 12 |
| Västerbotten | 12 | 7 |
| Västernorrland | 6 | 5 |

[v] Number of articles concerning the different counties in Norrland (n=61)

| Counties | Number |
|---|---|
| Gävleborg | - |
| Jämtland | 17 |
| Norrbotten | 31 |
| Västerbotten | 12 |
| Västernorrland | 1 |

[vi] Actions and roles by Norrlandians and the Swedish Government/officials

| | Norrlandians | Government/officials |
|---|---|---|
| Actors-role | 10 | 22 |
| Goal-role | 27 | 3 |

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